CITY HILIGHTS

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GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

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QUICK READ

Leaders' Families Accused of Massive Encroachment

Bengaluru

Former BBMP leader N.R. Ramesh has accused the families of Magadi MLA H.C. Balakrishna and former BBMP Deputy Mayor B.S. Puttaraju, along with two IAS and five KAS officers, of encroaching over 500 acres of government land in Tavarekere hobli, allegedly worth ₹12,000 crore. Ramesh has submitted complaints to the Lokayukta, Enforcement Directorate, Chief Minister and Deputy Commissioner, backed by 8,879 pages of documents, seeking immediate recovery of the land. He further warned that an additional 1,100 acres of government land across several villages in Bengaluru South taluk is at risk, citing earlier findings of the Ramaswamy Commission.

Accident Chain on Flyover Leaves Biker Seriously Injured

Bengaluru

A series of collisions on the Electronics City–Silk Board flyover left a biker severely injured on Thursday. The incidents, captured on a car's dashcam, began when a KSRTC bus allegedly braked negligently, causing a car to crash into its rear. A bike approaching from behind then lost control and rammed into the car, throwing the rider onto the road. The biker suffered serious head injuries and was immediately shifted to a private hospital. Police are investigating the sequence of events and the role of the KSRTC driver.

Jalahalli Man Loses ₹1 Lakh Online

Bengaluru

A man from Jalahalli lost over ₹1 lakh to cyber fraudsters while attempting to book a hotel room online. The victim, Raj Sharma, was shown attractive photos of hotel rooms by the scammers, who used them to gain his confidence and persuade him to transfer the money. Once the payment was made, the fraudsters switched off their phones, leaving Sharma unable to contact them. Realising he had been duped, he approached the police. A cyber-fraud case has been registered at the Peenya police station, and investigations are underway to identify and track down the culprits.

Phone-In Drive Helps Speed Up Grievance Redressal

The programme aims to quickly address citizen grievances and ensure timely civic action

BENGALURU

A weekly phone-in programme, held at 7 a.m. on Friday at the Byatarayanapura Control Room on Amruthahalli Main Road, continued to serve as a direct platform for citizens to voice concerns and seek immediate action from the Bengaluru North Municipal Corporation.

Launched on September 26, the initiative has received 552 grievances over the past 10 weeks. Of these, 396 complaints have been resolved, while 28 issues falling outside the corporation's jurisdiction were forwarded to the relevant municipal bodies or departments. Officials were instructed to expedite action on the remaining 110 pending grievances.

During Friday's session alone, 26 complaints related to road damage were registered. Authorities noted that pothole-filling work is underway round the clock and directed officials to further accelerate the process, ensure quality, and prioritise road maintenance to ease traffic movement.

Five complaints related to waste collection prompted instructions to strengthen timely garbage pickup and proper waste disposal across all wards.

Another five complaints concerned dangerous trees or branches, following which forest officials present at the venue were asked to take immediate precautionary action.

In total, 43 callers participated in Friday's programme, resulting in 56 registered complaints. Officers have been directed to verify every issue and initiate swift remedial measures.

The phone-in programme will continue every Friday, with the aim of providing rapid solutions to citizens' problems while enabling close monitoring of development works within the corporation limits.

Rao Orders Plan to Stop Sewage Inflow Into K–100 Waterway

BENGALURU

Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao has directed civic agencies to prepare a comprehensive action plan to completely stop sewage from entering the K–100 citizen waterway. The instruction came during his inspection of the stretch from Anepalya Junction to Shantinagar Bus Stand, covering nearly 2 km.

Rao noted that while sewage inflow has been significantly curbed in many parts of the K–100, certain areas continue to face the problem. He said BWSSB must immediately survey these pockets and submit a detailed proposal outlining permanent solutions.

To improve water quality, a 5 MLD Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) has already been set up near Kumbaragudi to treat wastewater from the stormwater drain. The treated water is being released back into the K–100 valley as part of a long-term restoration effort. For remaining sewage intrusion, officials are adopting biological treatment methods and other nature-based solutions.

The citizen waterway project along the 9.2-km Koramangala stormwater drain—from KR Market to Bellandur Lake—has achieved 90% completion. Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao has instructed officials to finish the remaining work at the earliest.

Concrete rings placed within the waterway have been planted with pollutant-absorbing species that naturally filter waste and release cleaner water downstream. Further, BWSSB is nearing completion of a 15 MLD Intermediate Sewage Pumping Station (ISPS) designed to intercept sewage before it enters the stormwater network. The Chief Commissioner instructed that the ISPS must begin functioning within a month.

During the inspection, officials found that garbage was being dumped at certain points along the waterway. Rao directed officers to identify households responsible, raise awareness, and install CCTV cameras at key locations to strengthen surveillance.

With most project works completed, Rao said the K–100 waterway should soon be opened for public use. Contractors have been instructed to maintain cleanliness along the walkway and regularly remove accumulated silt.

Bengaluru South City Corporation Commissioner K.N. Ramesh, Additional Commissioner (Development) Naveen Kumar Raju, Chief Engineers Basavaraj Kabade, Rajesh, Ravi, B-SMILE, BWSSB officials and others accompanied the inspection.

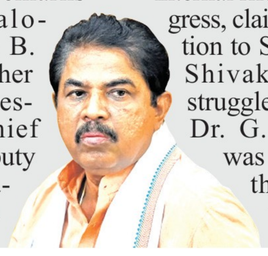
Ashoka Demands CBI Probe as Judges Flag 63% Corruption in State

BENGALURU

Opposition Leader R. Ashoka on Friday demanded that ongoing corruption cases in Karnataka be handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), citing recent public remarks by judges who claimed corruption levels in the state had reached 63 percent. Addressing a press conference, he said the judiciary itself had become "a witness to corruption," making an independent probe essential.

Ashoka criticised Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and the Congress government, alleging widespread scandals including the Valmiki Development Corporation scam, MUDA scam, and what he termed a "63 percent commission raj." He said the BJP had earlier demanded that Siddaramaiah appear as a witness, accusing the ruling party of turning Karnataka into an "ATM" for elections in other states. "About ₹300 crore has been shifted for the Bihar elections," he alleged, adding that "PayCM posters should be pasted on the faces of Congress leaders."

Referring to remarks made by Upalokayukta Justice B. Veerappa and other judges in the presence of the Chief Minister and Deputy CM D.K. Shivakumar, Ashoka said their comments highlighted how deeply corruption had seeped into government functioning. He listed alleged kickbacks across departments, including ₹25 lakh per acre in Bhovi Corporation land allotments, ₹20 lakh for bar licences, a ₹90 crore transformer installation scam, and irregularities amounting to ₹2.5 crore in waste-management machinery procurement.



Ashoka further claimed that corruption had eroded the integrity of law enforcement. "When the Chief Minister steals, even the police join hands. Since they must collect money, they appear in criminal activities," he alleged. He also targeted Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi, stating that while they chant "chor-chor," theft is visible in Karnataka under their party's government.

With the winter session approaching, Ashoka said the Opposition would raise issues concerning farmers, flood relief, and neglect of North Karnataka on the very first day. He also pointed to internal rifts within the Congress, claiming that in addition to Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar's power struggle, Home Minister Dr. G. Parameshwara was also aspiring for the Chief Minister's post.

BJP to Target Siddaramaiah's Ahinda Image at Winter Session

BENGALURU

The BJP is preparing to challenge Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's long-standing projection as a champion of Ahinda—minorities, backward classes, and Dalits—by alleging that his government's policies have, in fact, harmed these communities. During the upcoming winter session in Belagavi, a group of OBC and Dalit BJP legislators plans to move an adjournment motion in both Houses to initiate a detailed debate on the condition of Ahinda groups. They accuse Siddaramaiah of using these communities as a political shield rather than ensuring their upliftment.

The BJP plans to highlight what it calls the government's mishandling of internal reservation for Scheduled Castes and its failure to extend similar benefits to Scheduled Tribes. The opposition also alleges diversion of sub-plan funds earmarked for SCs and STs, as well as inadequate measures to support OBCs. BJP leaders further claim the Congress treats Muslims as vote banks without guaranteeing meaningful development. They also accuse Siddaramaiah of blocking Dalit leaders such as Mallikarjun Kharge and G. Parameshwara from becoming Chief Minister, while pointing to delays in filling cabinet posts vacated by ST ministers. "We will focus on how Siddaramaiah is exploiting Ahinda communities to advance his political interests.

Kannada Christians demand fair church representation

BENGALURU

Strong concerns have been raised by the All Karnataka Catholic Christians Kannada Association, alleging that Konkani groups hold unilateral control over church administration across the state. Association president A. Isaac said Kannada Christians are being sidelined, their language ignored, and their clergy denied fair opportunities.

Speaking at a press conference at the City Press Club on Friday, Isaac said that Karnataka has 14 religious regions, yet only the Chikmagalur diocese has a Kannadiga bishop. He alleged that Kannadiga priests are not being promoted because of the strong influence of coastal-origin voting groups within the Church. He further said that both Bengaluru Archbishop Peter Machado and former Archbishop Bernard Moras have failed to address long-pending demands of Kannada Christians.

Isaac expressed frustration that key church positions, administration, commissions, seminary training centers, and major institutions are dominated by the coastal Konkani lobby. This, he said, has left Kannada Christians feeling like silent spectators in their own state. The recent public remarks of Roy Castellino from Mangaluru have escalated tensions, with Isaac calling the comments insulting and unauthorized.

He urged the Supreme Patriarch to implement the 3/1983 circular across Karnataka without delay. He demanded an end to what he called "coastal monopoly," and said that just as local bishops lead churches in Tamil Nadu and Telangana, Karnataka too should prioritize Kannadiga clergy and restore dignity to the Kannada language.

Man Dies by Suicide at Kengeri Metro Station

BENGALURU

Metro services on the Purple Line were briefly disrupted on Friday morning after a 38-year-old man died by suicide at Kengeri metro station. The deceased, identified as Shantagoud Police Patil from Vijayapura district, allegedly jumped onto the tracks in the early hours, leading to an immediate halt in services between Mysuru Road and Challaghatta.

Kengeri police rushed to the spot soon after receiving the alert. Officers said they are yet to gather more details about the man, including his occupation and the circumstances leading to the incident. CCTV footage from the station is being examined, and a case of unnatural death will be registered. The body has been shifted to a mortuary, and police are attempting to contact his family using the address listed on his Aadhaar card. In an official statement, Namma Metro said trains were operated only up to Mysuru Road after services beyond the station were suspended around 8.30 am due to the incident. Full services on the Purple Line resumed at 9.40 am after clearance from the authorities.

Faster Trips as Bellandur, Huskur Ease Congestion

BENGALURU

Train travel towards Tamil Nadu is set to become quicker and more reliable with the commissioning of two new crossing stations—Bellandur Road and Huskur—on the busy Byappanahalli–Hosur corridor. South Western Railway (SWR) announced that the additions have significantly reduced bottlenecks on the single-line stretch, enabling faster operations and fewer delays for thousands of daily commuters.

The upgrades form part of Karnataka Rail Infrastructure Company Limited's (K-RIDE) ongoing ₹498-crore doubling project between Byappanahalli and Hosur. Although work began in June 2020, only 14 km of the 48-km double line has been completed so far. Last week, a crucial 3.5-km stretch between Carmelaram and Bellandur Road was commissioned following inspections by the Commissioner of Railway Safety.

SWR officials said capacity has nearly doubled on the corridor. "Earlier, only two trains could be handled between Byappanahalli and Heelalige. With doubling, we can now accommodate four trains on this section," an official said. Freight services headed to Hosur, Dharmapuri, and Sivadi—which were earlier regulated inside the congested KSR Bengaluru area—can now be halted at Bellandur Road station, easing pressure on the city centre.

K-RIDE's Director (Project & Planning), Rajesh Kumar Singh, said trains coming from Byappanahalli previously needed a clear path all the way to Heelalige near Bommasandra, causing delays. "Now, Bellandur Road has five tracks and Huskur has four, substantially improving operational flexibility," he said. The long-neglected Bellandur Road station has also received a significant facelift. It now features a new entrance, upgraded platforms, tactile pathways, and a functioning lift to assist elderly passengers.

PROGRAMME EXTENDED

BWSSB Extends EMI Scheme to Commercial Properties

BENGALURU

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has widened the scope of its 'Sarala Cauvery' easy monthly instalment (EMI) scheme to include commercial establishments, marking a significant expansion of its initiative to encourage piped Cauvery water connections and curb groundwater dependency. The scheme, previously available only to individual houses and apartments, now enables commercial property owners to opt for piped water by paying 20% upfront and the remaining 80% in 12 monthly instalments.

Launched earlier this year, the programme has already seen strong uptake among residential consumers. BWSSB Chairman Ram Prasath Manohar said that in the last five months alone, 25,000 households and apartments have availed the EMI facility. Although connection charges vary depending on property size and other technical factors, the EMI structure remains the same for all users.

"We are pleased with the response from residential users. Extending the EMI scheme to commercial establishments will help us increase piped water coverage and reduce the dependence on borewells and private tankers," Manohar said.

As of the end of October, BWSSB has completed 1,99,990 Cauvery 5th Stage connections. With an overall target of 3.5 lakh connections by 2028, the utility has already crossed the halfway mark in the first year of operations. Of the nearly two lakh completed connections, 1,12,990 were existing 4th Stage users across 110 villages who have now fully shifted to the 5th Stage network. Another 87,000 new connections have been added since October 2024, indicating growing demand for reliable piped water. Many of these 110 villages, primarily in east Bengaluru, have long depended on borewells and water tankers due to unreliable groundwater sources. BWSSB officials believe the expansion of 5th Stage connections will significantly reduce tanker dependence in these areas.

The utility plans to continue scaling up connections over the coming months to meet its 2028 target. "We've already achieved 50 percent of the goal and are confident of completing the project within the stipulated timeline.

Woman Alleges Forced Conversion, Threats and Abuse by Partner in City

BENGALURU

A woman in Bengaluru has levelled grave allegations against a man identified as Usman, accusing him of coercing her to convert to Islam, threatening to kill her, extorting money, and subjecting her to physical and sexual abuse.

According to the victim, she met Usman through a friend two years ago. She initially declined his proposal, but later agreed after he allegedly threatened suicide and assured her he would not pressure her to convert. The two then entered a live-in relationship that lasted nearly 18 months. Trouble began when discussions turned to marriage. The woman claims Usman insisted she convert, and when she refused, he assaulted her. She further alleges that he threatened to kill her in a "Delhi-style" manner—cut her into 32 pieces, store her body in a refrigerator, and then marry again. The victim also accused Usman of cheating her of ₹12.20 lakh, taking her gold ornaments and pledging them, and blackmailing her with private photographs.

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MODI-PUTIN MEET

India–Russia expand trade and strategic cooperation

Modi and Putin unveiled a five-year India-Russia roadmap, boosting trade, investment, strategic ties, and cooperation across multiple sectors

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday announced a renewed push to deepen economic and strategic ties, unveiling a five-year roadmap to strengthen trade and cooperation despite global sanctions pressures. Modi told Russian President Vladimir Putin that India "is not neutral" but firmly "on the side of peace" in the Ukraine war, echoing the position he conveyed to Donald Trump earlier this year.

Speaking at the India-Russia Business Forum, along with Russian President Vladimir Putin, PM Modi invited Russian businesses to "come and Make In India and partner with India". Both leaders finalised the India–Russia Economic Programme 2030, aimed at elevating bilateral trade and investment. They also signed multiple agreements to boost collaboration in health, mobility, critical minerals, and people-to-people exchanges. Modi described the long-standing partnership as resilient, noting that the India–Russia friendship has remained constant through decades of global upheaval.

India-Russia to achieve $100 billion bilateral trade

Putin said the countries will prioritise cooperation in security, trade, culture, and energy, setting a target to raise annual bilateral trade to USD 100 billion. PM Modi recalled that last year, President Putin and he set a target of reaching ₹100 billion in bilateral trade by 2030.

Putin says Russia ready to supply 'uninterrupted' fuel

Putin also expressed Russia's willingness to ensure uninterrupted fuel supplies to India and proposed collaboration on small modular nuclear reactors and floating nuclear power plants. Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to promoting a more balanced and multipolar global order.

Push for early FTA with EAEU

The two sides are also working toward an early conclusion of a Free Trade Agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union to further open market access. Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, briefing the media after the summit, said New Delhi and Moscow also underlined the importance of hastening work on a new Bilateral Investment Treaty.

'India and Russia will stand united against terrorism'

Prime Minister Modi said India and Russia will work jointly against terrorism, citing the Pahalgam and Moscow attacks. He praised Russia's consistent support, stressed global unity against extremism.

Congress says LoPs not invited to Putin banquet

The Congress on Friday said Leaders of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi have not been invited to the banquet for Russian President Vladimir Putin, and took a swipe at its own MP Shashi Tharoor for accepting the invite. This comes a day after Rahul alleged the Modi government is going against "tradition."

DGCA forms 4-member panel to probe IndiGo op failures

NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Friday launched a high-level inquiry into IndiGo's widespread flight disruptions, appointing a four-member committee led by Joint Director General Sanjay K. Bramhane. The investigation comes after IndiGo's operations spiralled into chaos over the past few days, resulting in hundreds of cancellations as the airline struggled to comply with new Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDTL) norms.

The regulator said preliminary observations pointed to "deficiencies" in IndiGo's internal oversight, operational preparedness, and compliance planning, necessitating an independent probe. The panel, which includes Deputy Director General Amit Gupta, Senior Flight Operations Inspector Captain Kapil Manglik, and Flight Operations Inspector Lokesh Rampal, has been given 15 days to submit its report. The findings will help determine regulatory action and strengthen institutional processes.

IndiGo cancels over 1,000 flights

IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers says over 1000 flights cancelled today to achieve reboot. "Tomorrow too there will be hundreds of cancellations," he says. A return to normalcy will be achieved between December 10-15.

DGCA launches a four-member probe panel to investigate IndiGo's planning lapses and crew shortages that triggered massive nationwide flight cancellations

The inquiry will examine the root causes behind the large-scale disruptions, including manpower planning failures, roster mismanagement, and the airline's readiness to implement revised FDTL rules that require 48 hours of weekly rest and limit consecutive night duties.

The DGCA noted that despite repeated advisories, IndiGo failed to accurately predict crew availability, conduct necessary training, and adjust rosters ahead of the transition, leading to cascading delays across its network since late November.

Govt puts new FDTL norms on hold

The government on Friday suspended the newly implemented Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDTL) norms with immediate effect to stabilise flight operations. The revised FDTL rules, which mandated 48 hours of uninterrupted weekly rest, limits on consecutive night duties, and other fatigue-management measures, were introduced in two phases from July 1 and November 1. IndiGo's slow pace of hiring additional crew led to severe roster shortages and widespread cancellations.

Social Welfare Department

Sri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister

Sri D.K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister

69th Mahaparinirvana Divas
of Architect of Indian Constitution, Great Humanitarian, Bharat Ratna
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Date: 06.12.2025, Saturday Time: 10.00 AM
Venue: (East Gate) Vidhana Soudha, Bengaluru.

Garlanding the Statue of
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
by

Sri Siddaramaiah, Hon'ble Chief Minister
Sri D.K. Shivakumar, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister
Dr. H.C. Mahadevappa, Hon'ble Minister for Social Welfare

"Educate, Organise and Agitate"
– Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Dr. H.C. Mahadevappa, Hon'ble Minister for Social Welfare discussing the programmes of Department with Officers

To strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement is the fundamental duty of every citizen of the country.

All are Cordially Invited

Secretary to Government, Social Welfare Department
Commissioner, Social Welfare Department

QUICK READ

Bike Rider Dies after Colliding With Parked Bus on Highway

Bengaluru

A 21-year-old motorcyclist, Sumanth, tragically died after hitting a parked private bus on National Highway 48 near Madanayakanahalli, Bengaluru, late Thursday night. Sumanth, a final-year BCom student at Soundarya College and the only son of Parvathy Janardhan, was killed instantly. The Seabird bus was parked without warning while en route to Tumakuru from Anchepalya. Nelamangala traffic police seized the bus and detained the driver. A case has been registered, and authorities are investigating the circumstances leading to the fatal accident.

Aryan Khan's Alleged Pub Misbehavior under ACP Investigation

Bengaluru

Shah Rukh Khan's son, Aryan Khan, is facing a probe over alleged misbehavior at a pub in Ashokanagar. Cubbon Park ACP is leading the investigation, which also involves checking the names of Nalapad and Zaid Khan. Police visited the pub, examined CCTV footage, and questioned the manager. Authorities are scrutinizing whether Aryan Khan showed a middle finger in public, to whom it was directed, and whether the act was intentional. The investigation aims to determine the exact circumstances of the incident before further action is decided.

Social Work Leads to Prosperity, Says Mohan Kumar

Bengaluru

BJP leader and Sulikere Gram Panchayat member SR Mohan Kumar emphasized the importance of socially oriented work. Speaking at a birthday celebration in Kengeri, he said that dedicating efforts to the welfare of the poor, needy, and senior citizens creates lasting impact and earns a place in people's hearts. "When we prioritize social empowerment over selfish interests, our lives become meaningful, and this path leads to prosperous and happy living," he stated. Several local leaders, including former BJP ward president Shashi Kumar and Mahendra of Ramasandra Milk Producers' Cooperative, attended the event.

D K SHIVAKUMAR COUNTERS CHALAVADI IN CARTIER WATCH ROW

Deputy CM Shivakumar refuted Narayanaswamy's allegations, posting his Lokayukta affidavit declaring three luxury watches, defending transparency

BENGALURU

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Friday hit back at Legislative Council Opposition Leader Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, who alleged that Shivakumar's Santos De Cartier watch was not properly accounted for.

Responding on X (formerly Twitter), Shivakumar posted a copy of the affidavit he had submitted to the Lokayukta, which lists three luxury watches: a Rolex and two Cartier watches valued at ₹9 lakh, ₹23.9 lakh, and ₹12.06 lakh. Taking a dig at Narayanaswamy, Shivakumar said a person in a responsible position should avoid making baseless statements, adding that he was transparent and had no reason to hide anything. He also reiterated that both he and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah have every right to wear watches of their choice.

The BJP has been criticising the duo for wearing "expensive" watches from the same brand, a controversy that erupted after the two leaders were seen sporting similar watches during a breakfast meeting at Shivakumar's residence.

On Thursday, Narayanaswamy had challenged Shivakumar's claim, alleging that the Cartier watch in question did not feature in his election affidavit

Narayanaswamy questions DKS's undeclared Cartier Watches

Speaking to the reporters Narayanaswamy said that wearing expensive watches even from the same brand is not an issue, but questioned why Shivakumar "lied" about declaring them. He said he reviewed Shivakumar's election affidavit, which lists a Rolex worth ₹9 lakh and a Hublot worth ₹23.9 lakh on page 38, but not the Cartier watches recently seen on both Shivakumar and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. "Where have you declared these? Are they purchased or something else?" he asked.

CCB Seizes Drugs worth ₹120 Crores in City-Wide Crackdown

BENGALURU

The CCB Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has intensified its crackdown on the city's drug network, seizing drugs worth Rs 120.32 crore and registering 213 cases till the end of November 2025. During the operations, over 200 kg of various narcotics were recovered, and 267 accused were arrested, including 82 foreign nationals.

Notably, 45 Nigerian drug peddlers were apprehended, highlighting the significant role of foreign nationals in the trafficking network. The seized substances included NDMA Crystal (43.5 kg), Hydrocannabis (27.08 kg), Ganja (156.6 kg), Opium (1.19 kg), Charas (30 g), Cocaine (207 g), Yaba tablets (9 g), Ecstasy pills (998 g), Heroin (140 g), LSD strips (149), Hashish oil (600 g), and Cannabis chocolate (14 packets).

The narcotics primarily enter the city through the dark web, courier parcels, and other clandestine channels. Cannabis is transported from Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, while chemical drugs are sourced from African nations, Mexico, Cambodia, and Thailand.

This year's seizures represent a significant increase from last year's Rs 89 crore. The CCB police emphasized that operations will continue unabated, targeting drug peddlers and networks to curb the menace of drugs in Bengaluru.

Officials reiterated that the campaign focuses on dismantling both local and international supply chains, ensuring strict enforcement, and raising public awareness about the dangers of drug abuse. Continuous vigilance, intelligence gathering, and coordinated action remain central to the Bureau's strategy.

Delhi police issue notice to DKS

NEW DELHI

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Delhi Police has issued a notice to Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar, seeking detailed financial and transactional information in connection with the ongoing National Herald case, officials said on Friday.

The notice, dated November 29, indicates that Shivakumar may hold "vital information" related to the case registered on October 3 against Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi. He has been asked to either appear before investigators or submit the requested documents by December 19.

The EOW has requested information regarding Shivakumar's personal and political background, his ties with the Congress party, and a comprehensive breakdown of funds allegedly transferred by him or associated entities to Young Indian. Investigators are also seeking details on the purpose and source of these transfers, any communications with Young Indian or AICC officials, and whether the payments were made under instructions from others.

Poaching Racket Busted: Four Arrested

BENGALURU

The Bengaluru Mobile Forest Division has arrested four individuals involved in poaching wild animals across forest areas. Raghu, Suhas, Shivraj, and Pawan attempted to escape in a Swift Dezire but were caught after a 6 km chase near Sathanur Circle, Kanakapura.

Forest officials recovered porcupine meat, two guns, an axe, and ammunition from them. Over the past two months, the poachers had been terrorizing forests in Mandya, Sangama, Meke Datu, Malavalli, and Purigala, evading authorities while hunting wildlife. The team maintained close surveillance before successfully apprehending the accused.

CM, DCM Inaugurate KIADB's New Multi-Storey Building

BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday inaugurated the new multi-storey building of the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB) in Gandhinagar, Bengaluru.

Constructed at a cost of Rs 32 crore on Acharya Tulsi Marg, the building spans 2,618 square metres and features two ground floors, five upper floors, and a terrace. The structure includes parking for 58 cars in the lower basement and 38 in the upper basement. Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar was also present for the inauguration.

Minister for Heavy and Medium Industries MB Patil handed over KIADB's profit of Rs 2 crore to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund during the event. Former Industries Minister and current MLA RV Deshpande, who had initiated the decision to construct the building, was felicitated for his contribution.

Principal Secretary of the Industries Department Selva Kumar, KIADB CEO Dr Mahesh, and several other officials attended the ceremony. The new building is expected to streamline KIADB's operations and provide modern facilities for its staff while supporting Bengaluru's growing industrial infrastructure.

IT Minister, GBA Chief Meet ORR CXOs, Promise Timely Infrastructure Fixes

BENGALURU

Minister for IT/BT, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Priyank M Kharge, along with Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao, met CXO representatives of leading companies along the Outer Ring Road (ORR) corridor at a townhall organised by the Outer Ring Road Companies Association (ORRCA) on Friday. The discussion focused on critical infrastructure, civic, and mobility challenges faced along this key technology and business corridor.

Industry leaders highlighted issues including last-mile connectivity to Metro stations, poor service roads and footpaths, congestion at major junctions, accumulation of garbage, telecom disruptions due to ongoing construction, and the need for smoother integration between Metro, buses, and workplace transport solutions.

Addressing the gathering, Kharge said the ORR corridor is central to Karnataka's global technology economy and emphasized the government's commitment to resolve high-impact issues. He noted that Rs 450 crore has been earmarked for comprehensive road upgrades along Silk Board to KR Puram, covering black-topping, service roads, street lighting, and pedestrian infrastructure. Kharge added that structured engagement with industry will continue and will be replicated across other corridors like Whitefield, Peenya, and Manyata to address area-specific challenges.

Installation of LED Lights Saves Energy, MLA ST Somashekar

BENGALURU

MLA ST Somashekar on Friday said that LED lights are being installed across areas under the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) to save energy and reduce costs.

He launched the project along the 100-foot road near Bangalore One and the Lakshmi Temple in Banashankari 6th Phase, 8th Block, in the Yeshwantpur assembly constituency. Somashekar highlighted that the initiative is aimed at improving public convenience while supporting energy efficiency and economic savings.

"The LED lights have been installed in all wards as per requirement to ensure safety and convenience for residents," he said. Several local leaders and officials were present during the launch, including former BBMP member Arya Srinivas, former Zilla Panchayat member Shivamadaiah, ward block President Mylasandra Nagaraj, President Arun Kumar, former Block President Amruth Gowda, and General Secretary Jayakumar.

Gold Purchase by 1,000 People in a Single Day: Muliya Enters Golden Book of World Records

"Swarnarpanam" Cultural Programme and Jewellery Showcase

BENGALURU

Despite the rising gold prices, over 1,000 people purchased gold in Bengaluru on a single day, earning Muliya a unique world record entry in the Golden Book of World Records. To commemorate this achievement, a cultural programme titled Swarnarpanam will be held on Sunday, December 7 at Manipal Centre on Dickenson Road in collaboration with Bengaluru Muliya and Drishti Art Foundation. A thematic jewellery exhibition celebrating the nine jewels of Shakti, tradition, art, and feminine divinity has also been organised.

During this splendid confluence of skill and artistic expression, a tribute will be offered to the nine forms of Goddess Durga, the embodiment of compassion, strength, and eternal beauty, through the unveiling of

"Swarnarpanam– Jewels of Shakti.

The event, commencing at 5.30 pm, will feature a unique presentation by Karnataka Kalashree Dr Anuradha Vikrant and the Drishti Dance Ensemble. After each performance, a traditional jewellery ramp walk "Swarnanadige" will be showcased, presenting innovative designs of Navaratna jewellery, ruby, pearl, emerald, diamond, yellow sapphire, coral, blue sapphire, hessonite, cat's eye, and more.

If Not Removed, BJP Will Remain in Opposition Forever, MB Patil Warns Ashoka

BENGALURU

Minister MB Patil on Friday strongly criticized BJP leader R Ashoka, saying that if he is not removed from the position of Leader of the Opposition, the party will remain in opposition indefinitely. Patil was responding to Ashoka's claim that the Congress government operates with "63 percent commission." He noted that the Deputy Lokayukta had made similar statements back in August 2019. "If BJP keeps such people as opposition leaders, they will remain in the opposition for generations, as long as the sun and moon exist," he said, calling Ashoka's remarks "ignorant and irresponsible."

TJS GEORGE, A.C. SHIVANNA HONOURED BY KUWJ

BENGALURU

Senior journalists T.J.S. George and evening bulletin journalist A.C. Shivanna were remembered for bringing dignity and excellence to newsrooms, by the Karnataka Union of Working Journalists' Association (KUWJ).

At a condolence program organized by KUWJ, speakers paid tribute to the late journalists. The event began with floral tributes to their portraits, followed by a minute of silence. Ravi Hegde, Editor-in-Chief of Kannada Prabha and Suvarna News, praised George and Shivanna for their vision and comprehensive insights, which added significant value to their newsrooms. He noted that their adherence to professional values complemented the growth of contemporary journalism and that they adapted effectively to technological changes over 25 years, setting an example for fellow journalists.

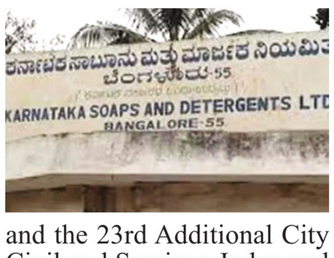
BASELESS ALLEGATIONS

'Allegations on KSDL by MLA HT Manju Are Baseless'

BENGALURU

Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Limited (KSDL) has dismissed allegations made by KR Pet MLA HT Manju regarding corruption in the purchase of raw materials, calling them "baseless and devoid of facts," said Managing Director PKM Prashanth. He emphasized that making such claims against a government-owned organization without evidence is unjustified. The state government has already provided extensive documentation, including 263 files containing about 1,500 pages, on April 25, May 23, September 26, and through an official letter on November 27.

Earlier, in 2023, Karnataka Aromas was mentioned in a Lokayukta raid, leading to a complaint filed in the Lokayukta Court. However, the case was dismissed in 2025, and Karnataka Aromas was cleared of all allegations, with no blacklisting from any court or institution. Legal opinions confirmed that no criminal record barred the company from participating in tenders,



and the 23rd Additional City Civil and Sessions Judge and Special Judge (PC Act), in Special CC 2074/2024, ordered release from the case. Consequently, KSDL awarded the subsequent tender to Karnataka Aromas as the successful L-1 bidder, following KTPP rules and transparent procedures.

The purchase price of sandalwood oil for 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 was Rs 2,23,750, Rs 2,24,450, and Rs 1,97,000 per kg respectively. Through the Electronic Reverse Auction process, prices were competitively reduced to Rs 93,116 per kg, saving the company approximately Rs 7.88 crore. All bidders had equal opportunity to participate, with names kept confidential to ensure fair competition.

Even when some bidders approached the court, the High Court upheld KSDL's transparent tender process in Writ Petition 27528/2025 on October 9.

Prashanth reiterated that KSDL conducts all tenders honestly and transparently, rejecting any claims of corruption. "The allegations made by MLA HT Manju are unfounded and harm the reputation of the organization," he stated, clarifying that the organization denies all accusations. This statement reinforces KSDL's commitment to accountability, transparency, and lawful business practices, ensuring trust in its operations.

QUICK READ

Committee to submit report on old pension scheme

CHITRADURGA

The committee formed by the Karnataka government to review the implementation of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) has completed its report and assured that it will be submitted within a week. District Employees' Association President Malatesh Muddajji said the association welcomes this development and has been consistently urging the government to replace the New Pension Scheme (NPS), in force since 2006. A delegation led by State Employees' Association President C.S. Shadakshari recently met NPS committee members and Finance Department Secretary Dr. M.T. Reju, who confirmed that the report is ready and will be submitted soon. The association has requested the government to honour the Chief Minister's election promise and implement OPS.

Dasoha Chakravarti Daneshwara swamiji passes away at 75

BAGALKOT

Daneshwara Swamiji (75) of Basavagopala Neelmanika Mutt in Bandigani village, Rabakavi Banahatti taluk, passed away after a prolonged illness. He had been undergoing treatment at KLE Hospital in Belagavi for the past four days, but he breathed his last on Thursday at 11 pm. Widely revered as Dasoha Chakravarti Annadaneshwara, Swamiji had a large following across Bagalkote, Vijayapura and Belagavi districts for his lifelong service and free food distribution. His mortal remains will first be taken to his native village, Savadi in Belagavi district, and later to the Bandigani Mutt. Public viewing will be allowed till 4 pm tomorrow, after which the final rites will be conducted as per Veerashaiva-Lingayat traditions.
In October, the mutt hosted a Sarvadharma Mahasangama for world peace.

Honnavar taluk Bagar Hukam committee meeting held

BHATKAL

A meeting of the Bagar Hukam Committee for Bhatkal and Honnavar taluks was held at the Bhatkal Taluk Tehsildar office, chaired by Fisheries, Ports and Inland Water Transport Minister and North Karnataka In-charge Minister Mankal S. Vaidya. The minister instructed officials to take necessary steps to review pending Bagar Hukam applications and ensure their swift disposal. Following the meeting, the minister handed over approval certificates to a total of ten eligible beneficiaries from Bhatkal and Honnavar taluks.

Muthalik alleges Hate Speech Bill targets Hindutva groups

Pramod Muthalik has launched a sharp attack on the Karnataka government, alleging the proposed Hate Speech Bill targets Hindutva groups

DAVANAGERE

Shri Rama Sena national president Pramod Muthalik has accused the Karnataka government of using the proposed Hate Speech and Hate Crimes (Prevention) Bill to target Hindutva organisations and eliminate their leaders. Addressing a press conference in Davanagere, Muthalik said the Bill was designed to corner Hindus for political gains, particularly to secure Muslim votes. He claimed that the Shriram Sena strongly condemns the legislation.

Muthalik argued that despite a cow slaughter ban, illegal slaughter continues in many areas. In such circumstances, questioning cow slaughter, raising concerns about "love jihad," or opposing religious conversions under the guise of love should not be considered crimes, he stated. He also questioned whether objecting to unauthorised construction of churches, mosques, or encroachments on cemetery land could be deemed wrong.

He alleged that the government was suppressing the right to question or protest, thereby undermining Hindus and violating the principles of the Constitution drafted by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. He urged BJP and JD(S) MLAs to strongly oppose the Bill in Cabinet meetings and prevent its implementation. The organisation plans to submit appeals to all legislators and exert pressure to block the legislation, Muthalik added.

During the event, Muthalik symbolically tore copies of the Bill to express his anger. Senior leaders of the Shriram Sena, including Parashuram Navinimani, Yashwant, Sridhar, and Madhu, were present at the press conference.

Provide info on non-communicable diseases: MP

DAVANAGERE

Dr. Prabha Mallikarjun urged the Centre to strengthen diagnostic infrastructure, support underserved districts, and address persistent issues faced by NHM contract staff nationwide

MP Dr. Prabha Mallikarjun raised key concerns about non-communicable diseases (NCDs) during the Question Hour in Parliament on Friday, seeking detailed information from Union Health and Family Welfare Minister J.P. Nadda. Highlighting the growing burden of NCDs across India, he stressed that early detection and timely intervention are crucial to preventing long-term health complications.

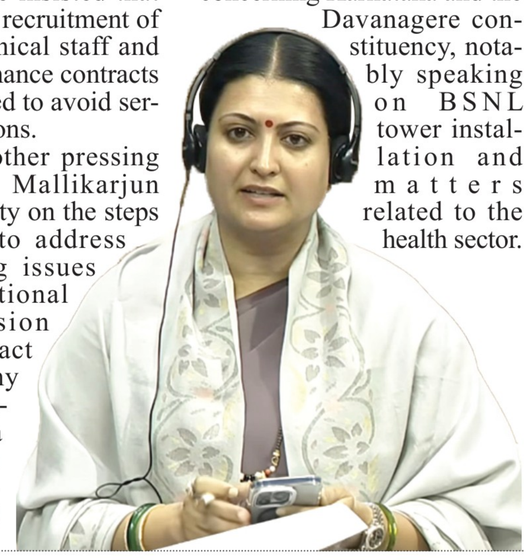
Dr. Mallikarjun urged the Centre to identify underserved districts and ensure they receive priority approval under the PM-ABHIM scheme within a fixed timeframe. He emphasised that improving diagnostic infrastructure should be a national priority, particularly in regions where access to healthcare remains limited.

The MP also demanded that the Union Government guarantee the availability of fully functional diagnostic facilities, including MRI machines, in all designated health centres. Along with equipment installation, he insisted that the mandatory recruitment of qualified technical staff and proper maintenance contracts must be ensured to avoid service interruptions.

Raising another pressing concern, Dr. Mallikarjun called for clarity on the steps being taken to address long-standing issues faced by National Health Mission (NHM) contract workers. Many of these workers, who play a crucial role in delivering preventive and diagnostic services for NCDs, continue to struggle with irregular salaries, lack of social security and disparities in working conditions. He said the government must offer clear updates on measures planned to resolve these challenges.

Pointing to India's population of 150 crore, the MP noted that using target population data and the percentage of individuals screened for NCDs should become key benchmarks for evaluating the country's health efforts.

For the third consecutive day in the ongoing Parliament session, Dr. Mallikarjun has been actively voicing issues concerning Karnataka and the Davanagere constituency, notably speaking on BSNL tower installation and matters related to the health sector.



CM, DCM to inaugurate projects worth ₹300 crore in Hassan

HASSAN

Hassan city is set to host Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on December 6, who will participate in multiple government programs, including project inaugurations, foundation stone ceremonies, and distribution of public welfare benefits. District Collector Lathakumari inspected the arrangements to ensure smooth execution of the events.

A total of ₹27.93 crore has been allocated for the city's Super Speciality Hospital, enabling the launch of departments such as Cardiology, Neurology, Neurosurgery, Urology, and Cardio-Thoracic Surgery. The hospital has been equipped with essential instruments and facilities for these units. The program aims to benefit over 70,000 residents, under the banner of a government service delivery assembly. In a major initiative, 12,000 new land records (pahani) have been created for previously unregistered government lands, preventing unnecessary visits to offices and aiding marginalized farmers. Documents including land records, mutations, and ownership certificates will be distributed to approximately 50,000 families.

Other highlights include the inauguration of the Prajasoudha building in Hassan, road construction in Arsikere, water supply projects from 18 tanks in Channarayapatna, and the second and third phase of Mini Vidhana Soudha construction in Sakaleshpur. A fleet of 1,154 government buses and over 250 private vehicles has been arranged to transport beneficiaries. Hassan district leads in Aadhaar linking, with 18 lakh of 19 lakh land records integrated, and over 15,000 e-Pauti accounts opened following verification of genealogical and birth/death records. Additionally, more than 5,000 citizens will receive official ownership certificates as part of the initiative, ensuring streamlined governance and citizen welfare.

DC's car seized over unpaid land compensation

SHIVAMOGGA

In a rare incident in Shivamogga, the Senior Civil Court ordered the seizure of the District Commissioner's car after authorities failed to pay compensation to a farmer whose land had been acquired by the government. The incident occurred on December 5 during a ministerial review meeting and press conference at the District Commissioner's office. Court-appointed officials arrived with the court order and proceeded to seize the DC's vehicle. The case involved one acre of land in Survey No. 101 belonging to Nandyappa of Haramaghatta, acquired by the government for a housing scheme. Despite repeated appeals over nearly 20 years to various officials, including former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, the DC, CEO, and Panchayat authorities, Nandyappa had not received full compensation. The court had initially ordered Rs. 22,60,000 in compensation. The district administration released Rs. 9 lakh and withheld the remaining amount. After persistent legal action, the Second Senior Civil Judge in 2020 directed immediate payment of Rs. 95,88,283, including interest. Yet, the administration and Panchayat continued delaying the settlement. Faced with this prolonged inaction, Nandyappa once again approached the court, leading to the rare step of issuing a warrant to seize the DC's vehicle. Speaking to the media, Nandyappa expressed his frustration, citing old age, illness, and the strain of traveling between Bangalore, Shivamogga, and the courts to pursue justice.

Dinesh Gundurao eyes CM post, launches 'Swastha Mysuru' initiative

MYSURU

Health Minister Dinesh Gundurao, while addressing the media in Mysuru, acknowledged his aspiration to become Chief Minister but emphasized that timing and circumstances will decide leadership. He clarified that there is no confusion within the party regarding the CM and Deputy CM positions, as both leaders are committed to high command decisions. Gundurao also criticized the opposition BJP for failing to raise farmers' issues effectively.

During the event, the minister inaugurated the 'Swastha Mysuru' initiative, a public health campaign aimed at preventing non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and promoting healthy lifestyles. Launched in collaboration with the Srikantadatta Narasimharaja Odeyar Foundation and Health World India Trust, the initiative will run in Mysuru over the next two years. It includes screening for NCDs such as diabetes, hypertension, and certain cancers, particularly targeting individuals over 30, alongside free medication distribution.

Gundurao stressed the importance of community participation in health awareness, encouraging people to adopt nutritious diets and avoid junk food. The campaign builds on the successful 'Healthy City Bangalore' program and involves 15 companies, hospitals, NGOs, and government bodies, focusing on physical activity, mental health, nutrition, and preventive care.

Srikantadatta Narasimharaja Odeyar Foundation president Pramoda Devi Odeyar and Health World founder Nalini Saligram highlighted the urgency of addressing rising NCD rates, warning that neglect could escalate future health challenges.

Block Cong holds protests against Starlight Company

MOODBIDRI

In Moodbidri, the Block Congress staged a protest against Starlight Company, which holds the contract for the 400 kV UTKL power transmission line project under the BJP-led central government. KPCC Secretary Mithun Rai warned that the company has been causing injustice to farmers in several areas of the taluk, and the Congress will not tolerate such actions.

He stated that if the central government claims authority over power, the Congress will assert its own influence and demand that Starlight Company be sent back to Andhra Pradesh.

Speaking at the protest in front of the administration building on Friday, Mithun Rai criticised BJP leaders who wear green scarves and pose as farmer leaders, misleading innocent farmers. He emphasised that true concern for farmers would involve protesting against the central government rather than staging theatrical displays.

The protest also highlighted the inactivity of various committees, including the Illegal Action Committee, KDP, and Ashraya Committees, which have been in place for nearly two years. Despite having MLAs as chairpersons, these committees have not held a single meeting. The Congress warned that MLAs have ten days to convene meetings, failing which protests will be staged directly at their offices. The demonstration was attended by former minister K. Abhayachandra, Block Congress President Praveen Kumar, Secretary Purandar Devadiga, Mooda President Harshavardhan Padival, spokesperson Rajesh Kadalakere, Women's Congress President Supriya D. Shetty, and other prominent leaders including Mittbailu Vasudev Naik, Ramesh Shetty Padumarnadu, Chandras, T.N. Kembare, Shaukat Beluvai, Abdul Latif, and several others. The protest drew widespread attention to the grievances of local farmers.

Cancer awareness drive with students

KARKALA : In Karkala, senior psychologist Jyeshthalakshmi Mangaluru emphasised that even if cancer reaches the second or third stage, there is no need for panic. With proper treatment, a balanced diet, and regular exercise, long-term survival is possible, she said during a cancer awareness dialogue held at the Indraprastha Hall in the town. The event was organised under the leadership of Mangaluru Institute of Oncology, Sanjeevini Cancer Service Trust, and the Cancer Information Centre, Karkala, with support from Team Sindhoor and Karkala Tigers. Jyeshthalakshmi explained that common symptoms of cancer include sudden weight loss, damage to vital organs, and weakened immunity. Nutritional deficiencies and a sedentary lifestyle often contribute to the disease's progression. She stressed that lifestyle modifications, early expert guidance, and timely check-ups can significantly aid recovery and reduce complications, highlighting that prevention and awareness are as crucial as treatment. The dialogue was attended by key dignitaries including S.V.T. Women's College Principal Geetha G., NSS Project Officer Shweta, Red Cross Project Officer Sona, Karkala Tigers founder Bol Prashanth Kamath, and Team Sindhoor member Chandrika Rao. S.V.T. Women's College students actively participated in the session.

UNCLAIMED FUNDS DRIVE

Special drive launched to settle unclaimed bank deposits

CHITRADURGA

A special camp has been launched in Chitradurga to address long-pending unclaimed bank deposits, insurance premiums, and shares, ensuring they are returned to their rightful owners or legal heirs. The initiative was inaugurated by District Panchayat CEO Dr. S. Akash on Friday at the Zilla Panchayat mini hall. Dr. Akash directed bank officials to seek support from women's self-help groups (SHGs) operating under various Gram Panchayats. He instructed that every bank branch in each taluk must gather information on unclaimed deposits and, with the help of SHG members and local panchayats, trace the legal heirs and hand over the pending amounts. Taluk Panchayat Executive Officers will be made responsible for monitoring this process, he added.

The district currently holds over 3.08 lakh unclaimed deposits and inactive accounts, amounting to ₹67 crore. Karnataka Gramin Bank alone accounts for ₹23 crore from more than 1.40 lakh inactive accounts. Dr. Akash emphasised that branch managers must review their progress regularly and either close inactive accounts or reactivate them. He also urged citizens to enrol in social security schemes like PMJJBY and PMSBY. RBI Chief Manager Meenakshi Gunju highlighted the need to follow new nomination rules while opening fresh accounts. District Lead Bank Manager M. Raghavendra said the special drive, being carried out under the Finance Ministry's guidelines, will continue in all banking, insurance, and related offices until December 31. Account holders or legal heirs can claim funds from accounts that have remained inactive for over 10 years. During the event, letters confirming activation of previously inactive accounts were distributed. Several officials from different banks and departments were present.

QUICK READ

Police firing range practice in Pandavapura

MANDYA

The Mysuru Railway Police Division has announced that the second half-yearly firearm training for 2025 will be conducted on December 6 at the Doddabyadarahalli Firing Range in Pandavapura taluk, Mandya district. Officers and staff from Mysuru and Arasikere Railway Police Stations, under the Mysuru Railway Police jurisdiction, will participate in the exercise. The training will take place from 5:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon. During this period, residents of Doddabyadarahalli and nearby villages are requested to avoid moving around the firing range area for their safety. Railway Police officials have issued this notice to ensure public awareness and prevent any accidents during the live-fire practice session.

Free textbooks and notebooks for govt students from next year

SHIVAMOGGA

Education Minister S. Madhu Bangarappa announced that from the upcoming academic year, all government students from Grade 1 to PUC will receive free textbooks and notebooks. Speaking at a press conference in Shivamogga with District Collector Gurudatta Hegde, CEO Hemant Kumar, and other officials, he added that computer classes will be introduced from Grade 1 in KPS schools. He highlighted the state's teacher recruitment drive, noting that over 13,000 teachers have been appointed since the current government came to power, with 800+ lecturers joining PU colleges and 6,000 teachers for aided schools. The minister also addressed crop disease issues, stating that ₹180 crore in compensation has been requested statewide, with ₹69 crore from Shivamogga, and assured efforts to provide necessary medicines for crop protection.

Eggs, bananas and midday meals extended to LKG and UKG

The Karnataka government has expanded its midday meal scheme to include LKG and UKG students, adding eggs and bananas for better nutrition

BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has expanded the midday meal programme to include LKG and UKG students in government schools, where English-medium pre-primary classes have recently been introduced. Previously, the Centre funded midday meals only for Classes 1 to 8, while the state supported Classes 9 and 10. Since no dedicated allocation existed for pre-primary children, schools were informally diverting a portion of food meant for older students.

From December 1, the state has issued an order approving funds for meals, along with eggs and bananas, for LKG and UKG. The cost per child has been set at ₹6.78, with ₹4.07 provided by the Centre and ₹2.71 by the state. The Azeem Premji Foundation will supply eggs and bananas four days a week, while the state government will take care of the remaining days.

The move supports the wider push to increase enrolment in government schools through the introduction of English-medium sections. Starting with 1,000 schools in 2019–20, the English-medium initiative expanded to 1,792 schools in 2024–25 and grew further by 208 in 2025–26. This year, English-medium instruction has been extended from LKG across 4,134 more schools.

The state has already spent ₹70 crore on developing these English-medium sections. Additionally, ₹755.62 crore has been allocated for providing eggs and bananas from LKG to Class 10. Altogether, 51,61,390 students will benefit from this initiative — including over 40 lakh in government schools and more than 11 lakh in aided institutions.

D. Sudhakar orders fast-track completion of nh-150a bridge works

CHITRADURGA

wDistrict In-Charge Minister D. Sudhakar has directed officials to speed up the completion of the National Highway bridge works near Hiriyur, stressing that the delay is causing frequent accidents for villagers crossing the road. Speaking at a review meeting held at Vikas Soudha, Bengaluru, the minister said that although most parts of National Highway 150-A in Hiriyur taluk are already operational, the stretch near Yaraballi remains incomplete. As a result, residents face severe risks and accidents have increased.

He also highlighted multiple issues at key junctions where NH-150A connects with NH-48. Vehicles coming from Huliyar often miss the route toward Bengaluru, while the service road from Challakere towards NH-48 is narrow and congested. Trucks parked along the Bengaluru–Hiriyur entry route have made city access difficult, especially at night, leading to eight deaths this year alone. Sudhakar criticised the National Highways Authority for "unscientific" planning.

Bridge works near KR Halli and Gorladakunte are progressing slowly, with damaged service roads causing major traffic blocks during weekends. The minister instructed authorities to repair service roads immediately and complete the bridges without delay.

He also insisted on new underpasses at Giddobanahalli (near Guilalu Toll), Hulugalakunte–Somerahalli stretch of NH-150A, and APMC near Babbur. Officials from NHAI, district administration and PWD must jointly inspect these locations.

PWD Principal Secretary Amlan Aditya Biswas pointed out the confusion motorists face while navigating toward Ballari from Bengaluru and recommended constructing two diagonal semi-clover structures.

Minister blames BJP for faulty rain gauges

SHIVAMOGGA

School Education and District Incharge Minister S. Madhu Bangarappa hit back sharply at the BJP, stating that the party is responsible for the failure of rain gauge systems in the state. He was addressing the media after holding a high-level review meeting with officials regarding diseases affecting arecanut crops, including fruit rot and leaf spot.

The minister explained that even though farmers have been paying crop insurance premiums on time, they are not receiving compensation for weather-related crop losses due to malfunctioning weather-monitoring machines. He said insurance companies must be held accountable for this failure. Bangarappa announced that he would be holding a meeting with the Development Commissioner next Wednesday or Thursday. He also directed Shivamogga Deputy Commissioner Gurudatta Hegde to convene meetings with DCs from Shivamogga, Uttara Kannada and Chikkamagaluru districts and submit a proposal to the state Development Commissioner.

He revealed that rain gauges installed on the rooftops of many gram panchayat buildings are covered with metal sheets to prevent leakage, which blocks accurate rainfall data collection. Questioning how crop insurance calculations would be done next year without reliable data, he warned of strict action against those who covered the equipment.

Bangarappa said that arecanut crop loss has been estimated at ₹180 crore, with ₹60 crore pertaining to Shivamogga alone. The state's Chief Secretary has already submitted a proposal to the Centre seeking assistance. Although each gram panchayat receives ₹14,000 annually for rain gauge maintenance, the work is not being carried out properly. The government will also discuss legal options for farmers to challenge defaulting insurance companies. He added that Agriculture Minister Krishna Byre Gowda has initiated the purchase of 2,000 new rain gauges for farmer benefit. Madhu Bangarappa criticised the BJP, saying the party should reflect on its failures before staging protests. He also announced that from the next academic year, government school students from Class 1 to 12 will receive free notebooks, textbooks and uniforms, and 800 PU lecturers along with 12,000 teachers will be recruited.

DC B.T. Kumaraswamy warns on crop, registration negligence

CHITRADURGA

Chitradurga Deputy Commissioner B.T. Kumaraswamy has issued a stern warning that officials negligent in conducting crop cutting experiments and maintaining birth-death registration records will face strict action. Speaking at the district-level "Second Quarterly Meeting on Agricultural Statistics" and the "Civil Registration Coordination Committee" at the DC office on Friday, he emphasised timely execution and accountability.

Officials must personally visit fields to conduct crop cutting experiments, and any negligence causing farmer losses will lead to recovery of damages from the responsible officers. Previous lapses have been met with strict action. In one case at Challakere taluk, illegal diversion of crop compensation funds was reported, and a committee has been appointed to investigate. Tehsildars and taluk Panchayat executive officers are instructed to conduct coordination meetings at their level; failure to do so will result in holding them accountable.

The Deputy Commissioner noted that each taluk should have held four agricultural statistics coordination meetings from July to October, but only two were conducted in Hosadurga and Molakalmuru. Officials failing to organise meetings will be issued notices and recommended for strict action.

During the current monsoon season, 3,824 crop cutting experiments for Sample-1 were completed, while 329 experiments under Sample-2 remain pending across departments including Revenue (185), Rural Development (79), Agriculture (42), and Horticulture (23).

A total of 1,076 experiments have been selected for 12 crops, including 1,026 notified and 50 non-notified crops. The district is also conducting the 7th minor irrigation survey across 1,117 villages.

On civil registration, Kumaraswamy instructed all government hospitals to issue birth certificates immediately upon delivery. Registration of births and deaths must be completed within 21 days; officers delaying the process will face strict action. Currently, 1,347 rural and 14 urban registration units operate in the district, with 17,861 births and 15,239 deaths registered between January and November. Digitisation of 32,650 old records has been outsourced to a private company.

The meeting was attended by senior officials from Horticulture, Women and Child Development, Health and Family Welfare, and Statistics departments.

NAME CHANGE

I, **DEVRAJ REDDY M** S/O MUNIREDDY, R/O No. 4 Anusha Nilaya, 4th Cross Valabai Patel Road Kalkere Main Road, Ramamurthynagar, Doorvaninagar, Bangalore North, Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560016, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as **DEVENDRA M**.

NAME CHANGE

I **LAKSHMIDEVI M** W/o G S SATHISH KUMAR, R/o Gandlahalli village and Srinivasapur, Kolar, Karnataka- 563126, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as **LAKSHMIDEVAMMA M**.

NAME CHANGE

I, **PARVATHAMMA BADRAIAH MUNIBACHAPPA**, D/o MUNIBACHAPPA, residing at No. 270, Siddapura, Whitefield Main Road, Bangalore - 560066, have changed my name to **PARVATHAMMA MUNIBACHAPPA**, vide affidavit dated: 04.12.2025 before Notary YANKOBA, Bangalore

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general publicthat the under signed proposesto form a new political party under the name: TAMIZHAGA JANANAYAGA VETRI KAZHAGAM.
The purpose of the forming the above political party for participate in democratic Political processes and uphold the values of the constitution of india.Any person as per citizenship act, 1855, institution or organisation in legal form having any objection to the formation of the said political party may submit ther objection in Writing 15 days from the date of publication of the notice in the following address:
PRESIDENT: PONNUSWAMY
TAMIZHAGA JANANAYAGA VETRI KAZHAGAM.
Head Office: Akshaya Complex, No. 1 Raju Avenue, Thondamuthur Main Road, Vedapatti Post, Kurumbapalayam, Coimbatore 641007

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are informed that my client MR. Channachar D. S/o Doddachar, residing at: 3rd Cross, Nirvaneshwara Nagar, Kanakapura Taluk, Bangalore South District– 562117.
Our client has lost previous Sale deed in Kanakapura Bus Stand the Original Registered Sale Deed bearing document No. KNK-1-03349-2008-09 date 08-09-2008 registered in the Office of the Sub-Registrar, Kanakapura, executed by Sri. V Lokesh S/o Late Venkatapathi, and Smt. Bhagyalakshmi W/o V. Lokesh, As the guardian of the minor children Rashmi and Varun, as their Mother, in favour of Sri T.C. Chandrasekhar S/o Channachar @ Doddachar in respect of the All that piece and parcel of the Survey No. 563/3, measuring 0-01.08 Gunta out of 00-18 Gunta Situated at: Kanakapura Village, Kasaba Hobli, Kanakapura Taluk, Bangalore South District, bounded on: East by: Seenappa's Property, West by: The twenty-foot path left open for walking at this same number, North by: Among this number, our own remaining land, South by: Ramachandra's Property.
The said property is in possession of Mr. Channachar D. since from 27-01-2012, he is the absolute owner and is absolutely free from any encumbrance whatsoever.
My Client had lost the above mentioned & Inspite of several efforts the Original deeds not found and he has lodged the police complaint through online dated 01-12-2025, Lost Report No. 1932727/2025.
If any person found or anyone having any claim or interest over the said property, he/she is requested to forward their claims along with the relevant documents to us within 07 days of this public notice. If we do not receive any claim from any person within 07 days, it will be strictly presumed that this property is absolutely free from any claim or encumbrance and no one has any claim over this property and if any One found the above deed kindly contact below mentioned.
Shivaswamy. S., Advocates, Mahadevappa Building 1st Floor 1st Room, Opp A.B.R. Tower, B.M. Road Ramanagara–562 159

CH CLASSIFIEDS
To place a classified ad contact:
080-41209042

IN THE PRINCIPAL COMMERCIAL COURT AT EGMORE, CHENNAI
C.O.S. No. 393 of 2025

Mr. A. Arul Rajan, Son of Mr. Arputham. ----Plaintiff

-VS-

Mr. Mohammed Tabraz, Proprietor of M/s. Diamond Fruit International.

TO
Mr. Mohammed Tabraz, Proprietor of M/s. Diamond Fruit International, A-12, APMC Market Yard, Huskur Village Road, Hosur Main Road Cross, Singana Agrahara, Bangalore - 560 099. ... Defendant

Take notice, that the above C.O.S. 393 of 2025 was filed by the plaintiff, when the above suit came up for hearing, before the Principal Commercial District Judge, Egmore, Chennai on 20.11.2025. The Hon'ble Court was pleased to order notice to the Defendant in one English Daily of Bangalore edition and has posted the suit for hearing on 10.12.2025. Take notice that kindly enter your appearance in person or pleader, at 10.15. A.M. on 10.12.2025 failing which the above suit will be heard and decided exparte.

Sd/-
KINGSLY SOLOMON J,
Advocate, Counsel for Plaintiff,
M/s. CORNER STONE ASSOCIATES,
No. 80, Law Chamber,
High Court Building, Chennai - 600 104

Government of Karnataka
The Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, Hassan Division, Hassan.
No. EE/PWD/HSN/JE-2/2025-26/ DATED: 04.12.2025.

TENDER NOTIFICATION NO: 27/2025-26, Dated: 04.12.2025

Tender is invited by the Public Works Department on behalf of the Governor of Karnataka, as per Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000, Standard Tender Document KW-4 from the eligible registered Contractors of Karnataka PWD Tenders invited through E-Procurement for 04 Works in Hassan division The minimum Estimated amount is Rs.138.50 lakhs and maximum Estimated amount Rs.215.60 lakhs. Last date of Receipt of tender is 22.12.2025 till 4.00 P.M. For more details visit https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in or contact this office through Phone No. 08172-268437 or in person during office hours.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, PWD, Hassan Division, Hassan.
ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ಹಿಸನಿ/ಹಾಸನ/821/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರವರ ಕಛೇರಿ,
ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ, ವಿದ್ಯುತ್ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಕೆ.ಆರ್. ವೃತ್ತ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು.
ಸಂ: ಕಾ.ಇಂ(ವಿ)/ಲೋ.ಇ/ವಿದ್ಯುತ್/2025–26/2091 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 04.12.2025

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು (ವಿದ್ಯುತ್), ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ವಿದ್ಯುತ್ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಇವರ ವತಿಯಿಂದ ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗೆ KW-3 STD ಷರತ್ತುಗೊಳಪಟ್ಟಂತೆ, ಮೊದಲನೇ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಕರೆಯನ್ನು ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ ಮೂಲಕ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳ ವಿವರ ಕೆಳಕಂಡಂತಿವೆ.

Sl. No.	WORK INDENTS	Work Value (Rs. in Lakhs)
1	Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 1 No. 6 Passenger 3 stops elevator to Hostel Building and 1 No. of 6 Passenger 4 stops elevator to Block-1 Quarters including Construction of Lift Shaft at Fiscal Policy Institute, Kengeri, Bengaluru. PWD/2025-26/EL/WORK_INDENT22497.	52.21

ಮೇಲಿನ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಲು ಇಚ್ಛಿಸುವವರು ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ನಲ್ಲಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಡಾಕ್ಯುಮೆಂಟ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು, **ದಿನಾಂಕ: 04.12.2025 ರಿಂದ 18.12.2025, 16.00 ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ** ಡೌನ್‌ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬಹುದು ಹಾಗೂ ಭರ್ತಿ ಮಾಡಿದ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಹಿಂತಿರುಗಿಸುವ **ದಿನಾಂಕ: 18.12.2025 ರಂದೆ 16.00 ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ** ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಟೆಂಡರ್ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು KPPP ನಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳಿಗೆ ಈ ಕೆಳಗೆ ಸಹಿ ಮಾಡಿರುವ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಛೇರಿಯನ್ನು ಕೆಲಸದ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಬಹುದು.

ಸಹಿ/– ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು(ವಿ).
ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ಉನಿ-ಸಿ.ಪಿ/4225/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

KARNATAKA STATE AKKAMAHADEVI WOMEN UNIVERSITY, VIJAYAPURA
Office of the Registrar, Jnana Shakti Campus, Toravi-586108.
Website: www.kswu.ac.in
No: KSAWUV/EXAM/E-Tender/2025-26/1197 Date: 03.12.2025

SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women University (herein after referred to as KSAWUV or University) invites Tenders from the eligible and reputed vendors/companies as per Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurements Act. The tendered, who have registered under e-governance Department of Karnataka may participate through e-tendering system. Bid documents may be downloaded from the E-procurement website http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in The eligible tenderer shall submit their e-Tender in under e-procurement platform as scheduled in e-portal. Contact number: 08352-297068, 8722116613

Sl. No	Name of Work	Tender Amount (in Rs.)	Tender Number	EMD (in Rs.)	Tender Period
1	Tender for Secured Scanning of Answer Booklets/Scripts At Centralized Scanning Centers without Cutting The Spine and Online Screen Marking (Digital Evaluation) of Answer Scripts Scanned for Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women University, Vijayapura.	3,86,10,000/-	KSWU/2025-26/ SE0010	5,80,000/-	365 Days
2	Printing and Supplying of Theory Answer Booklets to Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women University, Vijayapura.	1,48,80,000/-	KSWU/2025-26/ IND0024	2,23,500/-	365 Days

ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ವಿಜಯಪುರ/517/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26
Sd/- Registrar, Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women University, Vijayapura

QUICK READ

Four militants nabbed amid cultural threats

Imphal

Manipur security forces arrested four PREPAK militants within 24 hours in Imphal East and Thoubal districts. Officials said they were involved in extortion and recruiting new members. Police also caught a vehicle thief and recovered a stolen car. Five cases were filed after cultural groups at the Sangai Festival received threats. Three militants have been arrested in these cases so far. Security checks have increased with 113 checkpoints across the state, along with protected movement on NH-37. Police urged the public not to believe rumours or fake social media posts, warning that legal action will be taken.

Delhi Police bust illegal night bar

New Delhi

Delhi Police raided an illegal bar running in Samaypur Badli and detained 25 people during a late-night operation. Acting on a tip-off, a team reached a building where youngsters were seen entering suspiciously. On the second floor, they found "Three Boxes Cafe" operating past midnight with loud music, liquor and hookahs. The owner, Anil, failed to show licences. Police seized beer cans, whisky bottles, hookahs, a sound system and fake currency notes. A case under the Excise Act and COTPA was registered. Those detained include the owner, staff and customers. Further investigation is underway.

Heavy stone on Kochi track sparks probe

Kochi

A major mishap was averted in Kochi after a loco pilot spotted a heavy grinding stone placed on a railway track near Pachalam bridge early Friday. The Mysuru-Kochuveli Express passed over it without derailing, and police believe it was a deliberate act of sabotage. Kerala Police, RPF and Railway Police have launched a joint investigation, with central agencies likely to join. Locals reported seeing a jeep and hearing strange noises around 2 a.m. A dead dog was also found nearby, adding to the mystery. CCTV checks are underway, and officials say similar sabotage attempts were reported in Kerala earlier.

Tejashwi's absence sparks questions in Assembly

It looks like you've shared a news-style excerpt about JD(U) MLA Chetan Anand's comments on the importance of the Leader of the Opposition

PATNA

The absence of Leader of the Opposition Tejashwi Yadav from the ongoing Winter Session of the Bihar Assembly has triggered strong reactions from the ruling NDA and several opposition lawmakers. His prolonged absence has become a political flashpoint, especially after reports surfaced claiming that he may currently be travelling in Europe.

JD(U) MLC Neeraj Kumar sharply criticised Tejashwi, saying the Opposition leader should publicly share full details of his trip. He argued

that Tejashwi, who recently lost the Assembly election, left for a vacation soon after and is now reportedly abroad even though crucial Assembly proceedings are underway. Neeraj Kumar also referred to media reports alleging that a history-sheeter named Rameez may be accompanying Tejashwi. He demanded clarity on whether proper court permission was taken and asked Tejashwi to release related documents and photographs to the public.

JD(U) MLA Chetan Anand echoed similar views, stressing that the Leader of the Opposition holds an important constitutional position. He said the presence of key leaders — including the Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Ministers, and the Opposition leader — is vital during every session. Their absence, he added, weakens the legislative process and sets a poor example for democratic functioning.

AIMIM MLA Akhtarul Iman also criticised the situation, saying that Tejashwi's absence sends a negative message at a time when the Opposition already has limited strength in the Assembly. He said personal matters may arise, but commitment to constitutional responsibility must remain a priority.

As political pressure grows, Bihar's leaders now await Tejashwi Yadav's response regarding his location and reasons for missing the session.

MLA ready to resign if Chief Minister directs

HYDERABAD

Former minister and Khairatabad MLA Danam Nagender, who is among the 10 BRS legislators facing possible disqualification for shifting loyalties to the ruling Congress, said he is ready to resign if Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy asks him to do so. He said no such direction has been given yet but he would follow the Chief Minister's instructions whenever required.

Nagender told reporters that the disqualification case is before the Supreme Court, and he will present his arguments there. He added that elections are not new to him, saying he has contested 11 times and is always confident of fighting and winning. He also said that Telangana will move forward strongly if Revanth Reddy continues as Chief Minister for another decade. Recently, Nagender sought more time to reply to the disqualification notice issued by Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar. The Speaker has already finished hearings for eight other MLAs accused of defecting from the BRS to the Congress. After hearing both sides, the Speaker has reserved his orders.

The BRS told the Speaker that the MLAs openly joined the Congress and even sat in the Treasury Benches. The accused MLAs denied this, saying they only met the Chief Minister to seek development funds for their constituencies. The BRS highlighted that Nagender even contested the 2024 Lok Sabha elections on a Congress ticket and that MLA Kadiyam Srihari campaigned for his daughter, the Congress candidate in Warangal.The Supreme Court earlier issued a contempt notice to the Speaker for delaying action on the petitions despite clear directions to decide within three months. The matter is expected to come up again after four weeks.

Nagender said he will argue his disqualification case in the Supreme Court, expressed confidence in elections, and stated Telangana will progress strongly if Revanth Reddy remains Chief Minister for a decade

Investigators say Soyab aided planner Umar by obtaining chemicals, shelter, and housing, becoming the case's seventh arrest

Court extends custody in Delhi blast case

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has extended the National Investigation Agency's (NIA) custody of Soyab, an accused in the November 10 Red Fort blast, by 10 more days. The explosion had killed 13 people and injured many others, leading to a major national investigation. Soyab was presented before the NIA court at Patiala House after his earlier custody ended. He had first been sent to NIA custody on November 26.

According to investigators, Soyab had given shelter to the main planner, Dr. Umar Mohammad, also known as Umar un Nabi. The NIA says Soyab provided important support that helped the attackers carry out the car blast near the Red

Fort. Soyab is the seventh person arrested in the case. Officials say he worked as a lab assistant at Al-Falah University in Faridabad and helped Umar collect chemicals from the university lab. He also arranged a rented room for him in Nuh shortly before the attack.

Just two days earlier, on December 3, the court had extended the custody of another accused, Jasir Bilal Wani, by seven days. Wani is also part of the same terror case.

The November 10 blast led to a large investigation that uncovered a strong and organised terror network with links to Jaish-e-Mohammed. Even before the explosion, several arrests had been made in different states, and officers were already looking into a wider terror group. After the blast, more evidence helped connect earlier arrests to the main crime.

Investigators say Umar carried a big suitcase with bomb-making tools and chemicals everywhere he went, working secretly like a mobile lab. Another arrested person, Dr. Muzamil Shakeel, also from Al-Falah University, confirmed that Umar had tested chemicals in his room before making the final explosive device.

Gig workers deserve safety dignity and justice

NEW DELHI

AAP MP Raghav Chadha raised a strong concern in the Rajya Sabha during Zero Hour, urging the government to act quickly to protect millions of gig workers across India. He called for an end to the growing "10-minute delivery" model, which he described as dangerous and unfair to delivery workers who face daily risks.

Chadha said delivery executives from platforms like Zomato, Swiggy, Blinkit, and Zepto, along with service workers from Urban Company and drivers from Ola and Uber, are the "invisible wheels of the Indian economy". He argued that large companies have earned huge profits while these workers continue to struggle without proper support.

DMRC launches big clean drive to fight pollution

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has started special anti-pollution drives across its construction sites as the city continues to struggle with poor air quality. Officials said the aim is to reduce dust, keep construction zones cleaner, and ensure that surrounding areas remain safe for the public.

Teams have been sent to different metro project sites to control dust and clear garbage. Workers are cleaning construction areas, removing road dust, clearing footpaths and medians, and properly disposing of waste. A major drive took place on Friday between Azadpur and Ashok Vihar, where damaged footpaths were restored, roads were repaired, and medians were beautified.

DMRC engineers also inspected the sites to make sure materials were covered and wheel-wash systems were working for vehicles leaving the construction areas. Officials said similar actions are being carried out in all ongoing metro corridors, along with regular pollution-control steps already in place.

DMRC currently manages around 19 km of city roads for metro work, and these stretches have been repaired to prevent dust spread. Over 100 anti-smog guns have been installed at sites and stations, while the Environment Department conducts daily checks. The corporation said controlling pollution remains a top priority during its expansion work.

Congress MLA seeks bail amid growing tension

KOCHI

Congress MLA Rahul Mamkootathil, who is currently avoiding arrest, has moved the Kerala High Court seeking anticipatory bail in the rape case filed against him. His petition is likely to be taken up later today or on Saturday.

This move comes just one day after the Thiruvananthapuram Principal Sessions Court rejected his earlier bail plea. The court said that police need to question him in custody because he has not cooperated with the investigation so far. Despite heavy pressure from the police and his own party, Mamkootathil has still not surrendered.

The police have expanded their search by checking mobile tower locations and questioning people who might be helping him. Officers said they have been unable to reach him and warned that his continued absence could lead to more legal action, including charges for blocking the investigation.

The Congress party, facing

public criticism for delaying action, dismissed Mamkootathil from its primary membership soon after the court refused his bail. Party leaders said they were left with no choice after the strong observations made by the court and rising public anger.

The case has sparked a political fight in the state. The ruling LDF has accused the Congress of protecting its leaders, while the Opposition claims that the government is leaking selected details to shape public opinion.

As the High Court prepares to hear the anticipatory bail plea, political pressure is expected to increase. For the Kerala Police, the main focus is to find the MLA before the court hearing begins.

Rajya Sabha discusses flights and safety issues

NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha on Friday held a shorter Question Hour, but the discussion remained lively as members raised concerns about the nationwide IndiGo flight disruption. Many members were stuck in Delhi because hundreds of flights were grounded. Trinamool Congress leader Derek O'Brien asked the Chairman to extend Question Hour by one more hour, saying members could use the time well since travel was already blocked. However, Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan declined the request, noting that Union Minister Kiren Rijiju had explained the IndiGo situation earlier in the day.

During the session, Union Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw spoke about India's growing work in Artificial Intelligence. He said that more than 200 events had been held across the country, with nearly two lakh students and teachers taking part. These events are part of the preparations for the India AI Impact Summit 2026. He added that Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants technology to reach everyone and that the government is building an AI system that is open and useful for all people. He also mentioned efforts in AI learning, research, and support for startups.

The Railways Ministry also faced detailed questions. BJP MP Sasmit Patra asked about the progress of the new anti-collision system called Kavach 4.0. Minister Vaishnaw shared the latest information about where the system has been installed and the plan to cover the busy railway routes soon. A serious moment came when a Kerala MP raised the case of a 19-year-old student who was injured after being pushed from a moving train near Varkala by a drunk passenger. The minister said extra compensation had been approved and that CCTV cameras, panic buttons, and more railway police would be added to improve women's safety in trains.

Court remarks spark fresh tension in Kerala scandal

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Leader of Opposition V.D. Satheesan strongly criticised the Kerala government after the High Court denied bail to key accused in the Sabarimala gold smuggling case and hinted that powerful people were still not being investigated. Satheesan said the court's words showed that people "bigger than the arrested men" were involved and that many important names had already come up during questioning.

He pointed out that statements before investigators mentioned former and current Devaswom Ministers, along with a senior CPI(M) leader described as "god-like". Satheesan added that the court's remarks proved that more CPI(M) leaders could soon face legal trouble. He criticised the ruling party for refusing to act even against those already arrested. According to him, the CPI(M) leadership feared what the accused might reveal from jail. Satheesan said the issue had grown serious because the Dwarapalaka idol of Lord Ayyappa was allegedly stolen, sold to a businessman, and replaced with a fake one. He stated that the gold and money involved were worth several crores. In another related case, former Travancore Devaswom Board president A. Padmakumar has also been named as an accused, increasing the political pressure on the government. Satheesan claimed that the Chief Minister's Office was influencing the probe, telling the Special Investigation Team not to question former Devaswom Minister Kadakampally Surendran until after the Lok Sabha elections. He said several former board chiefs had already named him, and there was proof linking him to accused Unnikrishnan Potty. Satheesan said the Congress would make the Sabarimala gold heist a major election issue.

NATIONWIDE SCIENCE MOVEMENT

Festival showcases India's science-led progress

NEW DELHI

The 11th India International Science Festival (IISF) will begin tomorrow in Panchkula, Haryana, bringing together scientists, students, innovators and knowledge keepers from across the country. The four-day festival, running from December 6 to 9, aims to highlight how science is driving India's growth and how traditional wisdom can blend with modern research.

Started in 2015, IISF has grown into a major national platform for sharing new ideas, encouraging innovation and connecting people with science. Over the years, it has expanded through large public events, interactive programmes and collaborations that bring together government bodies, research groups, universities, industries and civil society. The government said the 2025 edition continues this long effort to place science at the heart of India's development plans.

This year's theme, Vigyan Se Samruddhi: for Aatmanirbhar Bharat, focuses on how scientific progress can help India become more self-reliant and prosperous. The festival will show how science supports economic growth, improves daily life and strengthens national capabilities.

IISF 2025 will give special attention to five main areas: the science, technology and ecology of North-West India and the Himalayan region; science for society and education; boosting self-reliance through technology; biotechnology and the growing bio-economy; and combining traditional knowledge with modern scientific methods. Officials say this balanced approach will help India preserve its heritage while moving forward with new discoveries.

More than 150 sessions will take place, covering subjects like biotechnology, space research, artificial intelligence and the role of traditional practices in shaping modern science. Students, teachers, experts and innovators will come together to share ideas and inspire one another. The festival aims to strengthen India's science culture and show how scientific thinking can guide the country's future.

QUICK READ

Bansuri Swaraj performs father's Ganga immersion

New Delhi

BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj performed the ritual immersion of her father, former Mizoram Governor and eminent lawyer Swaraj Kaushal's ashes, in the Ganga at Garh Mukteshwar on Friday. Kaushal, husband of former Union Minister Sushma Swaraj, passed away Thursday, prompting condolences from national leaders, including PM Modi, BJP chief J.P. Nadda, and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. The last rites were held at Lodhi Road Crematorium. Several political leaders and Delhi BJP officials attended the Ganga ritual. A condolence meeting in his memory is scheduled on December 7 at PSOI Club, Chanakyapuri, for friends and well-wishers to pay respects.

Delhi Police Nab 2021 attempt-to-murder fugitive

New Delhi

Delhi Police Crime Branch arrested 31-year-old Monu alias Murga, a proclaimed offender wanted in a 2021 attempt-to-murder case from Rajouri Garden. Monu, who had been absconding for nearly four years, was declared a proclaimed offender in February 2025 after evading all court proceedings. He allegedly stabbed a local chicken shop owner in a monetary dispute and is a habitual criminal with cases including assault, rape under POCSO, and another attempt-to-murder. A specialized team tracked him to Vishnu Garden, where he was caught after attempting to flee. Monu's criminal activities date back to 2015.

Calcutta HC rejects PIL against Murshidabad Mosque

Kolkata

The Calcutta High Court on Friday refused to intervene in a PIL challenging suspended TMC MLA Humayun Kabir's plan to build a "Babri Mosque" in Beldanga, Murshidabad. The division bench directed Kabir to hold the stone-laying ceremony on December 6 while following strict law-and-order protocols. The court also instructed the West Bengal government, police, and Union authorities to maintain peace. Kabir, despite opposition from the landowner, vowed to ensure construction. The Trinamool Congress suspended him for breaching party discipline and stoking religious sentiments. The matter has stirred tensions in the sensitive region.

Akhilesh Yadav demands transparency in UP voter list

On November 27, Yadav completed his SIR form, urged others to do so, and donated Rs 2 lakh to a BLO's family

LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Friday raised strong concerns over the ongoing Special Summary Revision (SIR) of voter lists in Uttar Pradesh. He demanded full transparency and accountability, warning that the process may be influenced politically and that officials are under undue pressure.

In a detailed post on X, Yadav asked the Election Commission to immediately release data showing how much of the SIR has been completed. He also urged that officials, known as BLOs, be relieved from life-threatening pressure and that additional authorized staff be assigned to assist them. Yadav stressed that no political party or its associates should interfere in the process now or in the future.

He called for a thorough investigation into whether people from marginalized groups are being wrongly removed from the voter list. The SP chief encouraged party workers and citizens to monitor the process and report irregularities to ensure no genuine voter is excluded.

On November 27, Yadav completed his own SIR form and shared it on social media, urging others to do the same. He also met families of BLOs who recently passed away, highlighting the risks officials face. During a press conference in Lucknow, he handed over a cheque of Rs 2 lakh to the family of one such official. Questioning the urgency of SIR when elections are still two years away, Yadav accused the Election Commission of favouring the ruling BJP. Despite political tensions in Bihar, he affirmed that the INDIA bloc remains united in Uttar Pradesh.

Yadav's statements underline growing scrutiny over voter verification in the state and the need for a transparent, fair process that protects the rights of every voter.

Centre grants relief for Waqf registration delay

NEW DELHI

Rijiju said the Supreme Court denied extending the deadline, advising mutawallis to approach the Waqf Tribunal, which can grant up to six more months for genuine reasons

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju announced that the Central government will not impose penalties for delayed registration of Waqf properties on the UMEED portal for the next three months. Although the official deadline ends today, the government decided to offer this relief after several MPs and community leaders said mutawallis were facing real difficulties in completing the process.

Rijiju explained that many groups had requested an extension, but the Supreme Court did not allow the deadline to be pushed further. The court said the law already provides a six-month window, and any extra time must be granted only by the Waqf Tribunal. He advised mutawallis who still cannot finish the process to approach the Tribunal, which can offer up to six more months if there are genuine reasons.

The Minister said progress has been uneven across the country. He noted that more than 1.5 lakh Waqf properties have been registered so far, with Karnataka performing especially well by completing nearly 50,000 registrations. States like Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir also did reasonably well, while several large states reported delays due to technical and administrative issues.

Rijiju assured that no strict action will be taken during the three-month grace period. He repeated that the government cannot change the timeline because Parliament amended the Waqf Act and the rules must be followed as written. Any issues related to missing records or disputes will have to be handled by the Tribunal.

He said the purpose of the registration rule is to make Waqf property management transparent and protect these assets for the welfare of weaker Muslim communities, especially women, children, and orphans. The Minister stressed that proper records will help prevent misuse and ensure these properties serve their intended social and religious purpose.

BJP MLA Vishwamitra Pathak said CM Yadav assured strict action after Brahmin MLAs from BJP and Congress demanded measures

Govt promises action over officer's remarks

BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh government signalled firm action on Friday after a controversy erupted over IAS officer Santosh Verma's alleged objectionable remarks about Brahmin women. State Urban Affairs and Housing Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya said the government considers the remarks "highly objectionable" and is working to ensure Verma faces punishment.

He said Chief Minister Mohan Yadav's government "will not tolerate such things" and the process for action is already underway. The minister was responding to questions from reporters outside the Vidhan Sabha during the Winter Session.

BJP MLA Vishwamitra Pathak also said that CM Yadav has assured strict action. A group of Brahmin MLAs from both BJP and Congress had earlier met the Chief Minister and demanded strong measures. The issue began at a November 23 event of the Madhya Pradesh AJJAKS body in Bhopal, where Verma was appointed state president. During his speech, he reportedly said reservation should continue "until a Brahmin gives away his daughter" to his son. The comments triggered anger across several Brahmin organisations, who said the remarks were disrespectful towards women and harmful to social harmony. Verma later apologised and said he was referring to the idea of 'Kanyadan' and the traditional concept of 'roti-beti' relations that promote inter-caste marriages. However, the backlash intensified, with many groups demanding an FIR along with disciplinary action.

The state government has issued a show-cause notice, stating that Verma's comments appeared to disturb social harmony and amounted to serious misconduct. As protests continue, the government maintains that action will be taken and that such statements cannot be accepted in a responsible public service.

Names flagged for removal in Bengal roll

NEW DELHI

BJP MP Praveen Khandelwal defended the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in West Bengal after officials flagged nearly 50 lakh names for possible removal from the voter list. He said the discovery proves why this verification effort is important for keeping India's democratic system clean and trustworthy.

Khandelwal said the large number of doubtful entries shows that people who do not live in the state were included in the voter list, which should never happen. He added that those questioning the SIR were now seeing why such checks are necessary to stop illegal additions to the rolls. Bihar Minister Nitin Nabin agreed and claimed the findings reveal manipulation of West Bengal's local population numbers. He said people who were not genuine residents were added as voters, which created space for unfair practices. He also said the Election Commission would look into the matter seriously.

Officials working on the SIR said around 50 lakh names were flagged during the digitisation of forms. The number rose from a little over 46 lakh on Tuesday evening to more than 50 lakh by Wednesday night.

Bike attack injures BJP MLA's Assistant

PATNA

A personal assistant to BJP MLA Kedar Gupta was shot and injured in Muzaffarpur, creating fear in the Maniyari area on Thursday night. The victim, Vinod Das, was returning from a wedding ceremony in Kaziinda when two youths on a motorcycle overtook him and suddenly fired. People nearby first believed the bikers were just racing, but the gunshots quickly caused panic.

Das, who has a history in local politics and once contested the Mukhiya election in 2021, was immediately taken to a private hospital. Police officers and bystanders reached the location soon after the attack. Rural SP Rajesh Singh Prabhakar visited the hospital, spoke with Das and his family, and confirmed that he is receiving proper treatment.

Police have started a detailed investigation. Raids are being conducted at several places to identify and catch the attackers. SP Prabhakar said the case will be solved soon and assured that the culprits will be arrested without delay.

The attack comes at a time when Bihar's Home Minister Samrat Chaudhary has been openly warning criminals to leave crime or leave the state. His recent statements have stressed strict action and zero tolerance against rising violence.

No policy yet for using AI in courts

NEW DELHI

India's judicial system is experimenting with Artificial Intelligence, but there is still no formal policy for using AI tools in court processes, the government told the Lok Sabha on Friday. Minister of State for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal said AI-based systems are being used only in limited pilot projects under the eCourts Phase III plan. He explained that the Supreme Court has formed an AI Committee and a special subcommittee of High Court judges and technical experts. Their role is to study data security, safe connectivity, and privacy protection as courts expand digital services.

Meghwal said the judiciary is aware of challenges such as bias in algorithms, language and translation issues, privacy concerns, and the need to manually verify AI-generated results. These concerns must be addressed before wider use.

Among the AI tools currently tested is LegRAA, an assistant that helps judges with legal research and document study. Another tool, Digital Courts 2.1, offers judges a single digital window to manage case details. It also includes voice-to-text features and translation systems to make dictation easier during orders and judgments.

So far, the Supreme Court's eCommittee has not detected any major bias or unexpected results from the pilot tools. But officials say AI use must be slow and cautious.

The minister also warned that courts are seeing more cases involving fake or manipulated digital content. Such offences are covered under the Information Technology Act, including identity theft and digital cheating. New provisions in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita also deal with electronic forgery and falsification of digital records.

With digital risks increasing, the judiciary says it must balance innovation with safety and fairness.

CM Vijayan slams Congress over Rahul Mamkootathil case

KOCHI

Ending a long break from media, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Friday addressed political and administrative issues, strongly criticizing the Congress-led opposition while defending his government's decisions on Sabarimala, university appointments, KIIFB, and the Travancore Devaswom Board.

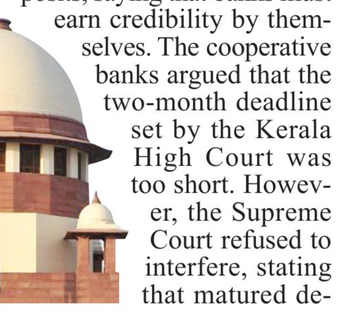
Speaking on the PM-SHRI scheme, Vijayan said all MPs, regardless of party, are "duty-bound to work for Kerala's progress." He praised CPI(M) MP John Brittas for his role in the scheme, while noting Opposition MPs now show more unity than before.

On the Rahul Mamkootathil MLA case, Vijayan said the police were doing "commendable work" and warned anyone trying to protect the MLA to stop. He called the revelations "the pathetic account of a maniac" and criticized Congress for remaining silent.

Regarding Sabarimala, he said the ongoing gold heist probe will continue without shielding anyone. On Vice-Chancellor appointments, he said he followed Supreme Court guidelines and questioned the Governor's actions.

Searches expand in doctors terror case

SRINAGAR



Jammu and Kashmir's State Investigation Agency carried out fresh searches in Srinagar and Ganderbal on Friday as part of the ongoing probe into a suspected doctors' terror module. Officials said the teams reached the Batamaloo area of Srinagar, where accused Tufail Ahmad Bhat had earlier been arrested from his home. Another search took place in Wakura in Ganderbal in connection with the same case.

According to investigators, Tufail was arrested on November 22 from Diyarwani Batamaloo after his suspected role surfaced in a wide network uncovered by police in Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana. The network was allegedly run by educated professionals, including several doctors working in Faridabad.

The breakthrough reportedly began when two overground workers of the Jaish-e-Mohammad outfit were arrested, leading to the detention of Dr Adil Rather from Qazigund. Police found an AK-47 rifle inside his locker at the Government Medical College in Anantnag. His questioning later helped officers trace Dr Muzammil Rather from Pulwama, who was held in Faridabad. Investigators recovered nearly 2,900 kilograms of explosives from his rented accommodation.

Another associate, Dr Umar Nabi, managed to escape. Police said Umar drove an explosive-laden car that blew up near the Red Fort in Delhi on November 10, killing thirteen civilians and injuring many others.

The investigation widened further with the arrest of Dr Shaheen Saeed from Lucknow. Police also detained another local doctor, Umar Farooq, and his wife, Shahzada Akhtar, accusing them of using their social influence to encourage young people toward radical ideas. Shahzada was also suspected of trying to revive the long-defunct Dukhtaran-e-Milat women's outfit. Officials said more searches may follow in coming days.

One year shows growth and rising tensions

MUMBAI

The MahaYuti government led by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis completes one year in office, marking a period of fast development mixed with political pressure and social tensions. The government pushed hard to improve major roads, transport systems, and urban projects. A special "Infrastructure War Room" was used to remove delays and speed up important projects. Maharashtra also shared its long-term plan, Viksit Maharashtra 2047, aiming to make the state a global investment hub. The government approved key steps such as a major loan guarantee for the Virar–Alibaug Multi-Modal Corridor. It prepared for the opening of the Navi Mumbai International Airport on December 25 and began planning for a new "Third Mumbai" with education and innovation hubs. The Vadhavan port project, expected to be among the world's top ten ports, also moved forward.

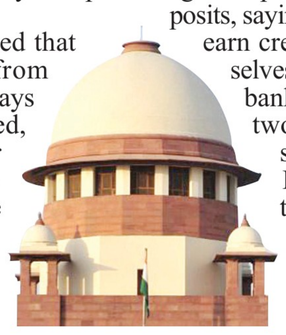
To improve connectivity in rural areas, funds were released to convert the Nagpur–Nagbhid line to broad gauge. In the health sector, more treatments were added under government schemes, and big financial help was approved for serious diseases. Long-serving contract workers under the National Health Mission received one-time regularisation. The state also approved an Urban Health Commissionerate to manage city healthcare better. Updates to the Maharashtra Land Revenue Code gave full legal status to digital land records. New courts were approved, and the fisheries sector received support similar to agriculture.

COURT PROTECTS DONATIONS

SC rules temple money cannot aid banks

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday firmly stated that money offered at temples "belongs to the deity" and cannot be used to support struggling cooperative banks. The remark came as a Bench led by Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi dismissed petitions filed by two Kerala-based cooperative banks. These banks had challenged a Kerala High Court order directing them to immediately return fixed deposits belonging to the Thirunelly Temple Devaswom.



The court stressed that funds collected from devotees must always be saved, protected, and used only for the welfare of the temple. It made clear that such money cannot become a financial backup for any bank. The Bench also questioned the banks for trying to depend on temple deposits, saying that banks must earn credibility by themselves. The cooperative banks argued that the two-month deadline set by the Kerala High Court was too short. However, the Supreme Court refused to interfere, stating that matured deposits must be released without delay. It dismissed the petitions but allowed the banks to approach the High Court if they needed more time to repay.

Earlier, the Kerala High Court ruled that temples under the Malabar Devaswom Board cannot keep money in cooperative banks in violation of circulars. It also held that cooperative societies had no right to withhold temple deposits once they matured.

QUICK READ

Sydney police probe after multiple gunshots fired

Sydney

A major police operation has been launched after multiple gunshots were fired outside a shopping center in southwest Sydney on Friday morning. A statement from the police force in the Australian state of New South Wales (NSW) said that emergency services were called to reports of shots fired outside a gym at a shopping center in Gregory Hills, 45 km southwest of central Sydney, at around 8:35 am local time on Friday. Police officers arrived and found that a number of shots had been fired at a man who subsequently left the scene.

Man killed in targeted shooting in Australia's Queensland

Sydney

A man has died following a targeted shooting in the Australian state of Queensland in the early hours of Friday morning. The Queensland Police Service (QPS) said that emergency services attended a property in the suburb of Slacks Creek, 20 km southeast of the state capital of Brisbane, at around 1:15 a.m. local time on Friday and located a man with an apparent gunshot wound. The 41-year-old man was transported to the hospital in a life-threatening condition, where he was declared deceased. A statement from the QPS said that initial investigations indicated that the incident was a targeted attack and that there is no ongoing threat to the public.

UNSC meets Aoun, tours south amid escalation

Beirut

Lebanon's President Joseph Aoun has met with a visiting United Nations Security Council (UNSC) delegation to discuss escalating tensions with Israel and efforts to disarm Hezbollah, a day after a wave of Israeli raids rocked the south of the country. Speaking with the UNSC team on Friday, Aoun urged them to pressure Israel to respect a November 2024 ceasefire it has violated on a near-daily basis and to withdraw from areas it continues to occupy in southern Lebanon.

Five Baloch Civilians Found Dead Amid Alleged Targeted Killings

Five Baloch civilians were found dead in separate regions of Balochistan, raising concerns over escalating targeted killings.

QUETTA

At least five bodies of Baloch civilians were recovered from different districts across Balochistan, including the tortured remains of an abducted man and others killed by gunfire, according to reports by The Balochistan Post. The grim discoveries were made in Panjgur, Khaliqabad and Zehri districts, deepening fears of rising violence in the restive region.

In Panjgur, authorities recovered the tortured body of Abdul Wahab from the Pulabad area of Prom Tehsil. Wahab, a resident of the Zamran

locality in Turbat city of Kech District, had been kidnapped on October 27, 2025, allegedly by Pakistan-backed death squads. During the abduction, he was reportedly shot and left paralysed. His body surfaced more than a month after he went missing, prompting outrage among local communities.

In a separate development, three bodies were discovered in the Badrang area of Khaliqabad district. Police transported the remains to a nearby hospital, where they were identified as Khuda Bakhsh, Zahoor Ahmed and Barkat Khan through identity cards found on them. Initial reports indicate that the three victims were cousins belonging to the Lehri tribe, adding to concerns about community-level targeting.

Meanwhile, in Zehri Tehsil of Khuzdar District, another young man's body was found near a roadside football ground. Identified as Shahzeb, son of Muhammad Aslam, the victim appeared to have been shot dead, according to early assessments by authorities.

Human rights organisation Baloch Voice for Justice (BVJ) condemned the killings, calling them part of what it described as Pakistan's systematic genocide of the Baloch nation. The group said the latest deaths raise serious concerns about targeted killings and highlight a complete failure of state institutions to safeguard civilians.

Thunderbird F-16C crashes in California desert; Air Force pilot ejects safely

CALIFORNIA

A US Air Force Thunderbird F-16C Fighting Falcon crashed during a routine training mission in the Southern California desert, though the pilot managed to eject safely and survived, the Air Force confirmed. The incident occurred at approximately 10:45 a.m. on December 3, 2025, over controlled airspace near China Lake, a remote community about 270 kilometres north of downtown Los Angeles.

In a brief statement, the Air Force Thunderbirds said the pilot was in stable condition and receiving follow-on medical care. The team added that the cause of the crash remains unknown and is currently under investigation by the 57th Wing Public Affairs Office. No additional operational details were released pending further inquiry.

The San Bernardino County Fire Department, which responded to the crash site, reported that the pilot sustained non-life-threatening injuries during the ejection. Emergency personnel treated the pilot at the scene before transporting him to a nearby hospital for evaluation. The aircraft crashed in a dry lake bed near Trona, where firefighters assisted China Lake emergency crews in extinguishing a small fire resulting from the impact.

A US Air Force Thunderbird F-16C crashed in California desert during training, with the pilot safely ejecting unharmed.

Authorities said there was no danger to nearby vegetation or residential areas. There is no threat to the community, the fire department stated, urging the public to avoid the immediate crash zone while recovery operations continued.

US Air Force Sgt. Jovante Johnson confirmed that the downed aircraft was part of the Air Force Thunderbirds, an elite aerial demonstration squadron based at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada. The Thunderbirds perform precision aerobatic manoeuvres at air shows across the United States and are considered a flagship unit of the Air Force.

Japan, China continue to spar at UN over Takaichi remarks on Taiwan

TOKYO

Japan and China have escalated their war of words at the United Nations following unprecedented remarks from Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi about Tokyo's role in a potential Taiwan conflict.

Japan's ambassador to the UN wrote to Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, disputing allegations from Beijing that Takaichi had violated the basic norms governing international relations while speaking to the Japanese Diet last month.

The assertions contained therein are inconsistent with the facts, unsubstantiated, and are categorically unacceptable, UN ambassador Kazuyuki Yamazaki wrote.

The letter marks the second time Japan has written to Guterres on the issue in as many months. Both times were in response to separate letters from China to the UN about Takaichi.

The dispute began in November when Takaichi told Japanese legislators that should China ever use force against Taiwan, the move would constitute a survival-threatening situation for Japan, according to Japanese media.

Taiwan and Japan do not have diplomatic relations, but they are close neighbours and unofficial allies. Their legislators also regularly engage in party-to-party meetings.

Still, experts say that Takaichi's comments marked a break in tradition for Tokyo, which is typically more circumspect on Taiwan issues.

India and Canada advanced their improving ties as officials discussed enhancing security cooperation and expanding collaboration across key sectors.

Indian Envoy, Canadian Minister Discuss Security Cooperation

OTTAWA

Indian High Commissioner to Canada, Dinesh K. Patnaik, met Canadian Public Safety Minister Gary Anandasangaree to discuss strengthening security and law enforcement cooperation between the two nations. The meeting, held amid signs of stabilising bilateral relations, marked another step forward in rebuilding trust and expanding joint engagements.

The Indian High Commission in Ottawa quoted Patnaik as saying he was honoured to meet Minister Anandasangaree, adding that the two discussed shared priorities in enhancing security collaboration. They also explored new frameworks for cooperation and mechanisms to reinforce ongoing engagements between India and Canada.

The meeting followed Patnaik's visit to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, where he sought to boost India's partnership with one of Canada's most economically dynamic provinces. During the visit, Patnaik met key provincial leaders, including Raj Chouhan, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly; Ravi Parmar, Minister of Forests; and Sunita Dhir, Parliamentary Secretary.

Patnaik also held productive discussions with Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation, and Jagrup Brar, Minister of State for Mining and Critical Minerals. Talks centred on enhancing two-way investments in mining, critical minerals and energy, while also advancing cooperation in emerging sectors like quantum technologies, life sciences and gold exports. These discussions highlighted the growing economic complementarities between India and British Columbia.

In a significant milestone, the High Commissioner and his wife, Poonam Patnaik, recently visited Treaty 7 land — marking the first-ever visit by an Indian High Commissioner to the Indigenous region. The historic November 24 visit aimed at strengthening ties between Indigenous Nations in Canada and communities across India.

According to the Indian High Commission, the visit focused on exploring shared histories, cultural similarities and heritage connections, while identifying opportunities for future collaboration.

Putin increasingly belligerent as truce talks flounder, Ukraine war rages

MOSCOW

Russia this week rejected the latest United States peace proposal for Ukraine and declared victory in battles over key Ukrainian cities – claims Ukraine has dismissed as propaganda.

Russia's Ministry of Defence on Monday night said it had seized the eastern Ukrainian city of Pokrovsk it has been besieging for a year. Defence Minister Andrei Belousov later repeated the claim personally.

Russia also said it had pushed Ukrainian defenders out of Vovchansk and Kupiansk, cities in the northern Kharkiv region.

Most of the city of Kupiansk is under the control of Ukrainian troops, said Ukraine's Joint Forces Task Force, a command structure responsible for the defence of Kharkiv, rebutting Russia's claim.

The reported Russian advances came on the eve of US envoy Steve Witkoff's arrival in Moscow for peace talks with Yury Ushakov, a key aide to Russian President Vladimir Putin. The General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces said the timing of the claims was designed to make an impression on the US delegation.

The brazen statements of the leadership of the aggressor country about the 'seizure' of these settlements by the Russian army are not valid, the General Staff said, decrying them as propaganda to influence participants of international negotiations.

The General Staff said its forces were still fighting in Pokrovsk, Vovchansk and Kupiansk.

UN supports South, Southeast Asian nations responding to flooding, landslides

UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations continues to support the governments of some South and Southeast Asian nations in responding to the catastrophic flooding and landslides that have reportedly killed over 1,500 people and impacted nearly 11 million people, a UN spokesperson said. In Sri Lanka, the United Nations and its partners continue to support the government-led response and assessments, Stephane Dujarric, spokesperson for the UN secretary-general, told a daily briefing on Friday.

He said that in close coordination with the authorities, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners have delivered emergency aid, including food, hygiene supplies, kitchen sets and water tanks, and early recovery efforts are underway, including deeper damage assessments.

For Vietnam, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Tom Fletcher allocated $2.6 million from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund to bolster assistance in the most affected provinces, to support shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, as well as food security interventions to complement the government-led efforts, said the spokesperson.

Dujarric noted that in Indonesia, the government-led response to the devastating floods in Aceh continues despite major logistical and access challenges, and the United Nations is working closely with the government there on logistics, health, water and sanitation, and is facilitating coordination with local partners.

The United Nations will continue to closely monitor the situation in the region and remain in close contact with national authorities, he said.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

	3		8		1		9	
8		7		9		5		3
4		9	5		3	1		8
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4	7	8	9	2	1	6	3	5
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3	5	9	4	8	6	2	7	1
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6	8	5	2	1	3	7	4	9
9	3	7	6	4	5	8	1	2
8	4	2	1	7	9	5	6	3
5	9	3	8	6	4	1	2	7
7	6	1	5	3	2	4	9	8

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

INDIA SOUTHSUDAN PARTNERSHIP

India and South Sudan Hold First Foreign Office Consultations, Strengthen Bilateral Cooperation

JUBA

India and South Sudan convened their first-ever Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) in Juba on December 4, 2025, marking a significant step in strengthening diplomatic engagement between the two nations. Delegations from both sides reviewed the full spectrum of bilateral relations, including cooperation in capacity building, human resource development, health, technical and vocational training, trade and people-to-people exchanges.

According to a statement issued by India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Friday, the talks were held in a warm and friendly atmosphere, reflecting the cordial ties shared by the two countries. The Indian delegation was led by Dr. M Suresh Kumar, Joint Secretary (WANA),

while South Sudan was represented by Ambassador Philip Jada Natana, Director General for Bilateral Relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

Both sides expressed satisfaction with ongoing collaboration across multiple sectors and reiterated their commitment to maintaining high-level engagements and regular institutional mechanisms. They also exchanged views on regional developments and affirmed continued cooperation at the United Nations and other multilateral platforms.

During his visit, Dr. Suresh Kumar met several senior South Sudanese leaders, including Vice President and Chief of Economic Cluster James Wani Igga, Foreign Minister Monday Semaya Kenneth Kumba, Mining Minister Martin Abucha, Livestock and Fisheries Minister Onyoti Adigo Nyikec, and Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Akuei Bona Malwal. These meetings further strengthened the momentum toward deepening the wide-ranging partnership.

The MEA noted that discussions highlighted progress achieved since the establishment of diplomatic relations and underscored the need to explore new opportunities for cooperation. Both sides agreed that the next round of consultations would be held in New Delhi at a mutually convenient date.

India and South Sudan share long-standing friendly ties. South Sudan gained independence from Sudan on July 9, 2011, following a referendum earlier that year. India was among the first countries to recognise the newly formed nation, with then Vice President Hamid Ansari attending the independence celebrations in Juba.

US sets 2027 deadline for Europe-led NATO defense, officials say

ORZYSZ

U.S. officials told European diplomats in Washington this week that the United States wants Europe to assume most of NATO's conventional defense responsibilities—including intelligence, forces, and missiles—by 2027. Five sources, including a U.S. official, said the message was delivered by Pentagon staff overseeing NATO policy. The shift would significantly alter how the U.S., a founding NATO member, cooperates with its key military partners. Pentagon officials expressed dissatisfaction with Europe's progress since Russia's expanded 2022 invasion of Ukraine and warned that the U.S. might withdraw from some NATO defense coordination mechanisms if the deadline is missed. Several European officials argued the 2027 goal is unrealistic given capability gaps.

Messi targets first MLS title as Miami clash with Mueller's Vancouver

Messi leads Inter Miami into a high-stakes MLS Cup final against Vancouver Whitecaps

MIAMI

Lionel Messi stands on the verge of securing his first Major League Soccer crown as Inter Miami prepare to face a resurgent Vancouver Whitecaps side in Saturday's MLS Cup final. Two years after transforming the league with his arrival in Florida, the 38-year-old Argentine maestro now aims to deliver the club's maiden championship since joining MLS in 2020.

Miami enter the final in blistering form, scoring 17 goals across five play-off games following a shaky start to the season. Central to their revival has been Messi's leadership and the mid-season addition of Argentine midfielder Rodrigo De Paul, who has injected balance and steel into Javier Mascherano's side. The decision to bench veteran striker Luis Suárez in favour of 19-year-old Mateo Silvetti has also added pace and energy to Miami's attack.

Their opponents arrive with momentum of their own. Vancouver, powered by German icon Thomas Müller, have surged since the 36-year-old joined in August. Müller—one of the few players with a winning record against Messi thanks to famous triumphs in the 2014 World Cup final and Bayern's 8-2 rout of Barcelona in 2020—has insisted Saturday's showdown is not a personal duel. "It's Miami against the Whitecaps," he said after their 3-1 Western Conference final victory.

The final features four World Cup winners—Messi, Müller, Sergio Busquets and De Paul—making it one of the most star-studded showpieces in MLS history.

For Miami, the transformation has been remarkable. In April, they were written off as a tired, ageing squad with only two wins in eight games, including a 5-1 aggregate defeat to Vancouver. Eight months later, they stand rejuvenated and confident.

Playing at home, Messi believes, could prove decisive. "We're in a very good moment… playing at home is a plus," he said.

Yet Müller, Miami's long-time nemesis, promises no favours. "The past is already in the books," he said. "Saturday is a new game."

Amorim fumes as late equaliser denies Man United crucial win

MANCHESTER

Manchester United manager Ruben Amorim admitted he was "angry" and "frustrated" after his side conceded an 83rd-minute equaliser in a 1-1 draw against relegation-battling West Ham at Old Trafford. The result denied United a chance to climb to fifth in the Premier League and left them winless in four of their last five matches.

United appeared on track for a crucial victory when Diogo Dalot broke the deadlock in the 58th minute. Casemiro's long-range effort fell kindly to the Portuguese defender, who controlled the ball smartly before spinning and firing past Alphonse Areola. But despite controlling large spells, United failed to kill off the game and paid the price late on.

West Ham had created little until a late corner triggered chaos in the United box. Jarrod Bowen's flick was cleared off the line by Noussair Mazraoui, but Soungoutou Magassa reacted quickest, side-footing home his first goal for the club to level the score and stun the home crowd. "It felt amazing," said Magassa, a summer signing from Monaco. "Everyone fought hard and I'm happy to score my first Premier League goal."

A late West Ham goal cost Manchester United vital points in the top-four race

United had chances to restore their lead in stoppage time, but captain Bruno Fernandes squandered two golden opportunities—dragging one shot wide and volleying another off target. Those misses summed up United's recent struggles, with the team having dropped points in matches where they led against Nottingham Forest, Tottenham, and now West Ham.

Amorim lamented the inconsistency plaguing his side. "We have everything under control and still concede. We need to do better," he said.

United sit eighth but remain only two points off the top four, a reflection of both the tight standings and the cost of their own missed chances. As Dalot put it, "This is the time of year when you can't drop points."

Chaufla Clinches Indian Racketlon Open Title, Beats Russian Veteran

MUMBAI

India captain Vikramaditya Chaufla triumphed over a competitive international field to lift the Willingdon Indian Racketlon Open trophy in Mumbai over the weekend.

Chaufla, a multiple World Championship medallist, displayed resilience and skill to edge past compatriot Animesh Kejriwal in a thrilling B-category final. The match ended 21–18, 21–10, 10–21, 19–18 in Chaufla's favour, highlighting the intensity and unpredictability of the sport.

Prior to the final, Chaufla faced Russian veteran Dmitry Dubovenko in a tense semifinal, which tested his stamina and tactical acumen across four disciplines. After dropping the first set 9–21, he rallied to win 21–16, 21–16, 21–17, demonstrating his versatility across table tennis, badminton, tennis, and squash—the four sports that define racketlon.

Racketlon, a rapidly growing multi-racket sport, challenges players to excel across different racquet disciplines in one event. The Indian Open forms part of the international Super World Tour and was hosted alongside the World Tour Finals, which featured the world's top eight men and women competitors.

The championship was organised by Willingdon Sports Club under the guidance of Ajoy Bhandare and Nikhil Bhandare. The event's success was also attributed to contributions from RISA president KK Cheema, representing the sport's governing body in India, and FIR chief Duncan Stahl, representing the international federation.

Chaufla's victory reinforces his status as a leading figure in Indian racketlon and highlights the sport's growing prominence in the country. With international stars participating, the Indian Racketlon Open continues to provide a competitive platform for athletes to showcase their versatility and athletic prowess across multiple racket sports.

BUENOS AIRES

Lionel Messi has said he "hopes" to be part of Argentina's squad for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, though the 38-year-old stopped short of a full commitment as he continues to assess how his body will hold up over the next few months. The Inter Miami and Argentina captain reiterated his desire to defend the crown he helped secure in Qatar in 2022.

"I hope I can be there. I've said before that I'd love to be there," Messi said. "At worst, I'll be there watching it live, but it will be special. The World Cup is special for everyone — especially for us, because we live it in a completely different way."

Messi, who will lead Inter Miami into the MLS Cup final against the Vancouver Whitecaps on Saturday, acknowledged that the competition for spots in Lionel Scaloni's squad is fiercer than ever. With Argentina's talent pool deepening rapidly, he admitted that several younger players have emerged as serious contenders.

> Lionel Messi says he hopes to play in the 2026 World Cup despite uncertainty

"New players keep appearing; aside from the ones already there, new faces keep coming in," said the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner. "When a group is like this, it's easier for newcomers to fit in."

Messi, Argentina's all-time leader in caps (196) and goals (115), has featured in five World Cups since his debut in 2006. Earlier this year, he said he would consider playing in 2026 if his physical condition allowed it, and his latest comments suggest that the door remains firmly open.

While fans around the world await a final decision, Messi's continued form in MLS and his influence on Argentina's national setup ensure that the possibility of a sixth World Cup appearance remains very much alive.

Messi hopeful of making 2026 World Cup as Argentina defend title

Germany embraces shared leadership with dual coaches at Junior WC

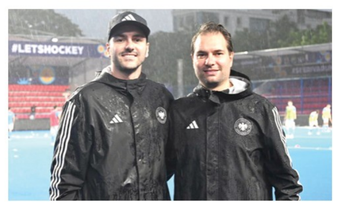
CHENNAI

Shared leadership is still something of a rarity in global sport, but Germany's junior men's hockey team has fully embraced the model. While multiple captains are occasionally seen at the junior level — a structure used by Australia, Chile, Switzerland, and Germany — dual head coaches remain unusual. India, too, employs a collective approach, relying on a leadership group of senior players to guide on-field decision-making.

At the international coaching level, however, most teams still prefer a single head coach backed by assistants. Germany broke from that convention at the 2021 Junior World Cup in Bhubaneswar when Johannes Schmitz and Valentin Altenburg were appointed co-coaches. The experiment paid off, with the team reaching the final before falling to Argentina.

Four years later, Schmitz is once again part of a shared leadership setup, this time alongside Mirko Stenzel at the ongoing FIH Men's Junior Hockey World Cup in Chennai. For the pair, co-coaching is not a compromise but an advantage.

"For us, it's a pleasure to



work with each other because we have known each other for a long time, and we have had so many journeys together," Schmitz told. "It's a big friendship and a privilege to work with this team."

Stenzel said the approach is deeply rooted in Germany's coaching philosophy. "Shared leadership helps us spread responsibilities and widen our leadership bandwidth. But trust is crucial — without knowing each other well, it won't work," he said.

Their 12-year relationship, strengthened during their time as assistant coaches with the German women's team, has shaped a natural working rhythm. "Earlier, Schmitz led on the pitch and Valentin handled the bigger picture. Now, we just look at each other and know who does what," Stenzel explained.

As Germany prepares for its quarterfinal clash against France, the seven-time champion remains focused, training intensely in Chennai's challenging conditions as it chases an eighth title.

ICC Announces November Player of the Month Nominees for Men and Women

NEW DELHI

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Friday revealed the nominees for the Player of the Month award for November 2025 across men's and women's cricket.

In the women's category, three players made the shortlist. Shafali Verma, who starred in the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup final, is joined by Esha Oza and Thipatcha Putthawong, both standouts from the inaugural ICC Women's Emerging Nations Trophy. Verma, drafted as an injury replacement for India's 50-over World Cup squad, top-scored in the final and helped India clinch their maiden title in Mumbai. In her sole ODI appearance for the month, she scored 87 runs off 78 balls at a strike rate of 111.53 and claimed two crucial wickets while conceding just 36 runs in 7 overs.

In the men's category, South African spinner Simon Harmer, Bangladesh all-rounder Taijul Islam, and Pakistan all-rounder Mohammad Nawaz are in contention. Harmer took 17 wickets in the two-match Test series against India, earning Player of the Match in the first game after capturing eight scalps, followed by nine in the second match. Taijul Islam impressed in Bangladesh's home series against Ireland, contributing to wins in both Test matches. Nawaz showcased his all-round skills in the tri-nation series against Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe, scoring 104 runs at an average of 52 with a strike rate of 114.28, alongside four wickets.

The ICC Player of the Month award recognises outstanding performances over the past month and highlights the impact of these players in both international and emerging cricket tournaments. Winners for November 2025 will be announced after the voting process involving fans, media, and the ICC panel concludes.

Olympic Flame for Milan-Cortina Winter Games Handed to Italy in Athens

ATHENS

The Olympic flame for the Milan-Cortina 2026 Winter Games was formally handed over to Italian organizers at the historic Panathenaic Stadium in central Athens, the site of the first modern Olympics nearly 130 years ago.

From Athens, the flame will travel to Italy to begin a 63-day, 12,000-kilometer relay across all 110 Italian provinces before arriving at Milan's San Siro Stadium for the opening ceremony on February 6. Italy will host the Winter Games for the third time and the first in 20 years, with 10,000 torchbearers scheduled to participate in the relay.

"To stand here in this historic stadium provides an inspiring reminder of the honor we have been granted and the precious treasure we will carry home with us," said Giovanni Malagò, president of the Milan-Cortina organizing committee, upon receiving the flame.

A forecast of heavy rain kept crowds small, but the ceremony proceeded with performances by Greek and Italian singers and a children's choir. After burning overnight in a cauldron outside the Parthenon, the flame was carried into the stadium by Greek water polo star Elena Xenaki, who, alongside Greece's women's national water polo team, lit a new cauldron.

The flame itself was ignited on November 26 in Ancient Olympia, the birthplace of the Olympic Games, using a concave mirror to focus the sun's rays—a ritual established through Greek-German cooperation before the 1936 Berlin Olympics.

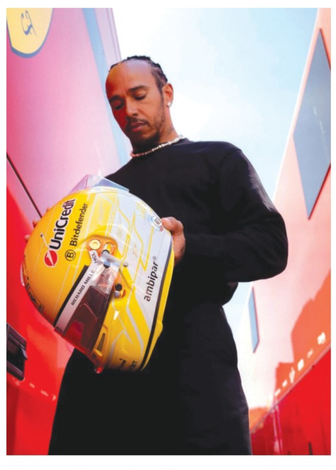
Lewis Hamilton Plans Ferrari Team Shake-up after Disappointing Season

ABU DHABI

Lewis Hamilton has announced plans for a major shake-up of his Ferrari team next year after enduring a dismal debut season with the Italian outfit. The seven-time Formula One world champion, 40, has gone a Ferrari record 23 races without a podium, marking the most challenging stretch of his illustrious career.

"It's been difficult," Hamilton admitted ahead of the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. "Confidence goes up and down, it comes with the territory. But I still have full belief in my abilities, and that's the most important. Holding onto that is not always easy, but it's what got me to where I am."

Hamilton said he was surprised by his own resilience during this period and emphasized his determination to



face the challenges ahead. "There's nothing I can't face moving forwards," he said.

While declining to reveal specifics, the Briton confirmed that significant changes to his team setup are on the cards for 2026. "It's not a straightforward process," he explained. "We are testing next week and then going back to the factory. I have to decide my approach."

Hamilton has meticulously analysed the season, reviewing decisions made during each race weekend. "In terms of personal perfection, I've written down what I felt went wrong every weekend and the decisions I've taken. There's a lot to do," he said.

He highlighted that the reshuffle would consider both his personal support staff and team personnel, aiming to optimise efficiency and teamwork. "How do you utilise people? Do people need to move into different positions to work better? All this needs to be looked at in my personal space so we can optimise our teamwork," Hamilton concluded.

As Ferrari looks ahead to 2026, Hamilton's planned changes signal a commitment to rebuilding and extracting maximum performance from the Scuderia in the coming season.

QUICK READ

India tackling e-waste with organised recycling

New Delhi

Although India remains among the top global generators of electronic waste, owing to increasing digitisation and a rapidly growing electronics ecosystem, the government is tackling the sustainability challenge with organised recycling and recovery of precious and rare materials, according to a media report. From informal dumps, the e-waste is being shifted to organised recycling, circular-economy models, and recovery of precious materials in India, GeoPolitico, a Greece-based news website, reported. The initiatives are leading to an increase in the synergy between innovation, environmental responsibility, and economic opportunity.

India gains even as global mobility of skilled workers falls 8.5 pc

Mumbai

India has strengthened its position as a talent engine even as the global movement of highly skilled workers fell 8.5 per cent year on year, equal to about 220,000 fewer long term cross border career moves, a report said on Friday. The report from Boston Consulting Group (BCG) said India posted a 1.9 per cent gain in global artificial intelligence (AI) talent share and a 1.4 per cent gain in STEM talent share, placing the country consistently in the global top 10 positions across all tracked talent categories.

ED attaches Anil Ambani group-linked assets worth Rs 10,117 cr to date

New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has provisionally attached properties and assets belonging to Anil Ambani-led Reliance Group entities worth Rs 10,117 crore to date. In the latest action, the financial regulator attached over 18 properties, fixed deposits, bank balance and shareholding in unquoted investments of Reliance Anil Ambani Group worth Rs 1,120 crore in Reliance Home Finance Limited/ Reliance Commercial Finance Limited/Yes Bank Fraud Case. The attached properties comprise seven properties of Reliance Infrastructure Limited, two properties of Reliance Power Limited, and nine properties of Reliance Value Service Private Limited.

UP Unveils 'One District, One Cuisine' to Boost Local Flavours

Uttar Pradesh announced a new culinary initiative, One District One Cuisine, expanding its successful ODOP model statewide.

LUCKNOW

Building on the remarkable success of its flagship 'One District, One Product' (ODOP) programme, the Uttar Pradesh government is set to introduce a new initiative — 'One District, One Cuisine' (ODOC) — aimed at showcasing the state's rich and diverse culinary heritage. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath confirmed the launch on Friday, noting that the programme will give each district a distinct identity based on its signature dish.

Chairing a high-level review meeting, the Chief Minister highlighted that Uttar Pradesh's food traditions — from unique halwas of different regions to the famed dalmoth varieties — represent the cultural soul of the state.

He emphasised that each district's speciality must be strengthened through improved quality, hygiene standards, packaging, branding and marketing, enabling local delicacies to evolve into competitive, recognisable brands.

Yogi Adityanath noted that ODOP and ODOC together would give Uttar Pradesh a major boost in its journey from local to global. He added that the new initiative will not only preserve culinary heritage but also generate economic opportunities by integrating traditional cuisine with modern market needs.

The existing ODOP scheme, launched in 2018, is now transitioning into ODOP 2.0 — an enhanced, professional and outcome-driven framework designed to match evolving global market trends, consumer preferences and technological advancement. The scheme has already become a cornerstone of Uttar Pradesh's export ecosystem, officials briefed.

According to state officials, ODOP has provided more than 1.25 lakh toolkits, sanctioned loans worth over ₹6,000 crore, and offered direct marketing assistance to more than 8,000 entrepreneurs. Thirty Common Facility Centres (CFCs) have been approved under the scheme, 44 ODOP products have been geo-tagged, and a wide range of ODOP items now feature prominently on major e-commerce platforms.

Indian Railways recruited 5.08 lakh people in last 10 years, up 23.6 pc: Minister

NEW DELHI

Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw informed Parliament on Friday that Indian Railways recruited 5.08 lakh people between 2014–15 and 2024–25, reflecting a 23.6% increase compared to the 4.11 lakh hires made between 2004–05 and 2013–14. Additionally, recruitment for 1,20,579 vacancies is underway as per the 2024 and 2025 annual calendars.

In a written reply to the Rajya Sabha, Vaishnaw said adequate manpower is being deployed to meet operational needs, technological upgrades, mechanisation, and modernisation efforts. Vacancies are primarily filled through indents placed with recruitment agencies based on the Railways' requirements.

From January to December 2024, 10 Centralised Employment Notifications (CENs) were issued for 92,116 vacancies across posts such as Assistant Loco Pilots, Technicians, Junior Engineers, and Railway Protection Force personnel. Computer-based tests for 32,438 Level-1 vacancies began on November 27, 2025, across 140 cities in 15 languages, while physical efficiency tests for 4,208 RPF Constable posts commenced on November 13, 2025.

Panels for over 23,000 candidates across technical, paramedical, engineering, RPF, and safety categories have been finalised. For 2025, seven additional CENs covering 28,463 vacancies have also been released.

Vaishnaw said RRB exams are highly technical, requiring extensive logistical coordination and trained manpower. Despite these challenges, the Railways conducted the recruitment process smoothly and transparently, with no instances of paper leaks or malpractice.

India has spent over seven thousand crore rupees upgrading railway stations nationwide under the ongoing Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.

Amrit Bharat Revamps 155 Stations, ₹7,253 Crore Spent

MUMBAI

The central government has utilised ₹7,253 crore up to October 2025 for the redevelopment of railway stations under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS), Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw informed the Rajya Sabha on Friday. The expenditure comes from a total budgetary allocation of ₹12,118 crore for the 2025–26 financial year.

In a written reply, the minister said redevelopment work is progressing at an encouraging pace across several key stations, including Tirupati, Yesvantpur, Rameswaram and Delhi's Safdarjung station. Since the scheme's launch, 1,337 stations have been earmarked for modernisation, out of which 155 have already been completed.

Vaishnaw noted that although the ABSS is primarily supported through budgetary funding, the government is exploring the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model for 15 selected stations. Based on the outcomes of these pilot PPP projects, the scheme may be refined further to expand private-sector involvement where beneficial.

He clarified that ownership of stations and operational responsibilities will remain with Indian Railways. However, for select major stations, certain activities or clusters of activities may be outsourced for specified durations depending on station needs, passenger demand and infrastructure requirements. Contract terms, he said, are determined individually for each project.

The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme has been designed with a long-term vision for transforming the country's railway infrastructure. Redevelopment is planned through detailed master plans implemented in phases, prioritising improved access roads, enhanced circulating areas, seamless integration with surrounding city spaces and upgraded station buildings.

Proposed improvements also include modern waiting halls, upgraded toilets, increased seating, drinking water facilities and passenger-friendly amenities. Plans feature wider foot overbridges or air concourses to match passenger volumes, along with lifts, escalators, ramps and enhanced platform surfaces.

Indian State Refiners Resume January Purchases of Russian Oil Amid Wider Discounts

CHENNAI

Indian state-run refiners Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) have placed fresh orders for January-loading Russian crude from non-sanctioned suppliers, capitalising on wider discounts, trade sources said.

BPCL has purchased four cargoes—two of Russian Urals and two of CPC blend crude. The Urals consignments were sold at a discount of $6–$7 per barrel to dated Brent, making them attractive amid fluctuating global crude prices. IOC, India's largest refiner, has also booked multiple Russian parcels for January.

Since the US imposed sanctions in October on major Russian producers Rosneft and Lukoil, IOC has restricted itself to sanctions-compliant supplies. BPCL, which skipped December Russian purchases, has now re-entered the market but does not plan additional January buys, having secured alternative volumes for its refineries.

CPC blend, largely of Kazakh origin but transported through the Caspian Pipeline Consortium system that also carries some Russian oil, enables refiners to legally procure barrels that avoid sanctioned entities.

IOC and BPCL did not respond to queries on the deals.

Meanwhile, MRPL, HPCL and HMEL have halted Russian imports due to tightened Western sanctions and financial hurdles. Nayara Energy—partly owned by Rosneft—remains the exception, continuing to process exclusively Russian crude.

Russia remains a key supplier to India, though purchases are increasingly shaped by compliance demands, sanctions and shifting market dynamics.

GDP GROWTH OUTLOOK

India's GDP to grow over 7 percent in H2 FY26

NEW DELHI

India's economy is expected to maintain robust growth in the second half of FY26, with gross domestic product (GDP) projected to expand at over 7 per cent in Q3 and Q4, according to SBI Research. After recording strong growth of 7.8 per cent in Q1 and 8.2 per cent in Q2, the full-year FY26 GDP is forecast at 7.6 per cent.

SBI Research noted that GST rationalisation, strong festive-season spending, resilient rural demand, and a gradual recovery in urban consumption are supporting the continued expansion. "We expect more than 7 per cent GDP growth in Q3FY26 and Q4FY26, leading to a full-year growth of 7.6 per cent," the report said.

In parallel, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) revised its inflation projections downward, reflecting lower food inflation, higher kharif production, healthy rabi sowing, adequate reservoir levels, and favourable soil moisture. FY26 inflation is now projected at 2.0 per cent, down from October's 2.6 per cent and February's 4.2 per cent estimate. SBI Research further forecast FY26 inflation at 1.8 per cent and FY27 at 3.4 per cent, noting that RBI may consider future rate adjustments depending on evolving trends.

The RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) on Friday cut the repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.25 per cent, maintaining a neutral stance. The SDF rate now stands at 5 per cent, with the MSF and Bank Rate at 5.50 per cent. Real GDP growth for FY26 has been revised to 7.3 per cent, with Q1 FY27 at 6.7 per cent and Q2 at 6.8 per cent. However, SBI Research cautioned that ongoing tariff and trade policy uncertainties could affect external demand for Indian goods and services.

Overall, India's economy is expected to sustain healthy growth while inflation remains well-contained, supported by favourable domestic consumption and policy measures.

Foxconn Plant Closure Reveals Hollow Core of China's Industrial Economy, Says Report

Foxconn's Henyang plant shutdown exposes China's industrial vulnerabilities as companies shift operations to India and Vietnam instead.

NEW DELHI

The abrupt shutdown of Foxconn's Henyang Hongfujin Precision Industry plant — formerly Apple's largest supplier facility in China — has exposed what analysts describe as the hollow core of China's industrial economy, according to a report published on Friday. The closure, which took effect on September 30, 2025, followed what the report termed the Chinese government's erratic regulatory policies, rising operational costs and the mounting pressure of geopolitical tensions.

The factory, once a major economic engine employing nearly 30,000 workers and generating billions in annual output, has now left behind deserted commercial zones. The Daily Mirror report noted that areas once bustling with retail stores and services tied to Foxconn's workforce now resemble abandoned towns, with shuttered shops and thousands of displaced workers pushed into unstable jobs, including food delivery and other gig work.

A combination of arbitrary regulations, increasing labour costs and the prolonged US–China trade war has created an uncertain environment for multinational companies. Apple, wary of Beijing's tightening controls and unpredictable policy shifts, accelerated its diversification strategy by relocating parts of its supply chain. India and Vietnam — offering tax incentives, transparency and policy stability — have emerged as preferred alternatives for global manufacturers.

The economic fallout of Foxconn's withdrawal was immediate and severe. The company once accounted for more than 80 per cent of Zhengzhou's export volume and over half of Henan province's total export output. Following Foxconn's reduced operations and relocation abroad, Henan's phone exports plummeted 60 per cent in the first quarter of 2024, contributing to a 23 per cent drop in the province's overall trade performance.

SpiceJet adds new flights from Delhi, Mumbai amid IndiGo operational chaos

MUMBAI

Domestic carrier SpiceJet added new flights from Delhi and Mumbai to multiple routes on Friday, as scores of passengers remain stranded across major airports in India due to the ongoing IndiGo operational crisis.

Taking to X, SpiceJet said, Quick update: We have added additional departures from Delhi and Mumbai today for your convenience. The airline shared details of flight numbers, locations and timings in its post. According to the details, SpiceJet is adding new flights from Delhi to Mumbai, Ayodhya, Pune, Bangkok, Bengaluru and Kolkata, among others. Meanwhile, new flights on the Mumbai route will be flying to Jaipur, Patna, Goa, Bengaluru, Gorakhpur, Chennai and New Delhi. However, the fares remain extremely high. According to the company's website, the 11:05 pm and 11:10 pm flights from Bombay to Delhi are priced at ₹40,599 and ₹34,299 for a one-way trip. On regular days, the price ranges between ₹4,000-₹7,000. Even though the company announced additional flights, at the time of filing this report none were available on most new routes, suggesting they had already sold out due to high demand. The additions come as IndiGo has faced widespread cancellations across India, with more than 400 flights cancelled on Friday alone. Passengers at major airports endured long delays and uncertainty as IndiGo struggled to stabilise its network. Delhi was the worst hit, with over 220 flights cancelled, followed by Bengaluru with 100 cancellations and Hyderabad with nearly 90.

The disruptions come after the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) issued flight duty time limitation (FDTL) rules last year, with phased implementation planned through November. The rules expand rest hours, limit night duties, and mandate 48 hours of weekly rest. However, amid growing disruptions, DGCA allowed relaxations to the airlines on Friday.

Match starts at 1.30 pm.

FORM WATCH — INDIA (Last 5 ODIs)

- Kohli: 100, 112, 52
- Rohit: 105, 68, 54
- Gaikwad: 101, 32

INDIA AT VISAKHAPATNAM (ODIs)

- Played: 10
- Won: 7
- Lost: 3

Ind hope for 'Ro-Ko' masterclass in must-win ODI decider today

India bank on experienced duo as youngsters face scrutiny in high-stakes decider

VISAKHAPATNAM

India enter today's series decider against South Africa with expectations resting heavily on veterans Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, but the spotlight also extends to the younger group fighting to stabilise their spots. After back-to-back stumbles, including a shaky outing in Raipur, India are desperate to avoid another home series defeat. A win here would momentarily silence chatter around team cohesion, but for that, Rohit and Kohli—architects of countless rescue missions—must once again shoulder the pressure.

Their recent form inspires confidence: Kohli arrives with two centuries and a fifty in three innings, while Rohit's last four outings include a hundred and two half-centuries. Yet India cannot rely solely on their senior pillars. Ruturaj Gaikwad's maiden ODI ton in Ranchi offered hope, but Yashasvi Jaiswal's struggle against left-arm pace remains a concern. Dismissed 30 times across formats by left-armers, his repeated vulnerability outside off demands urgent correction, or the management may consider shuffling the opening combination.

The ACA-VDCA pitch typically aids batters, prompting India to consider strengthening the middle order. Washington Sundar may make way for Tilak Varma, who brings batting depth, part-time spin and sharp fielding. Dew, which favoured South Africa in the previous matches, remains unpredictable due to coastal humidity.

India also need cleaner execution from young pacers Prasidh Krishna and Harshit Rana, who must complement the in-form Arshdeep Singh.

South Africa, eyeing their first-ever ODI series win in India, will assess injuries to Nandre Burger and Tony de Zorzi before finalising their XI.

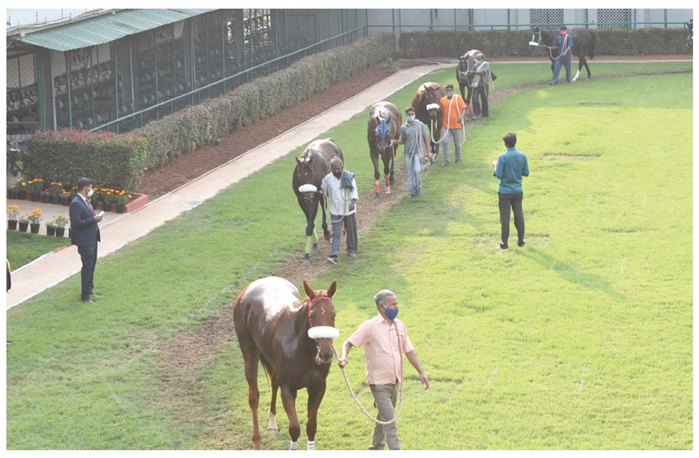
Glanders outbreak puts B'luru, Mysuru racing seasons at risk

BENGALURU

Racing in Bengaluru and Mysuru has been thrown into crisis after five horses at the Bangalore Turf Club (BTC) reportedly tested positive for the highly contagious and potentially fatal Glanders disease, raising the possibility of the entire Winter Season being cancelled. The outbreak, which has already crippled racing in Hyderabad and Chennai, first emerged a month ago when 15 horses succumbed to the infection, prompting concern among Karnataka turf authorities.

Those fears intensified last week when several BTC horses began showing symptoms such as fever and coughing. Samples were immediately sent to the Government Veterinary Hospital in Hebbal, and sources confirmed that five have tested positive. As mandated by Central government norms, the B samples will now be sent to the National Research Centre on Equines (NRCE) in Hisar — South Asia's only authorised facility for Glanders confirmation. The results, expected in a few days, will be decisive for the season's fate.

BTC chairman L. Shivashankar declined to comment on the preliminary findings, saying the club would wait for NRCE's official report before taking further action. However, insiders familiar with such outbreaks fear the worst, noting that preliminary assessments rarely differ from NRCE's final confirmation.



Even one horse is confirmed positive, the entire stable must be sealed off. All 750 horses in the BTC complex would require repeated testing every 21 days, with three consecutive negative cycles needed before racing can resume

If even one horse is confirmed positive, the entire stable must be sealed off. All 750 horses in the BTC complex would require repeated testing every 21 days, with three consecutive negative cycles needed before racing can resume — a lengthy and expensive process. The implications extend beyond Bengaluru: horses will be unable to travel, jeopardising participation in marquee events like the Indian Derby in February and the Invitation Cup in March.

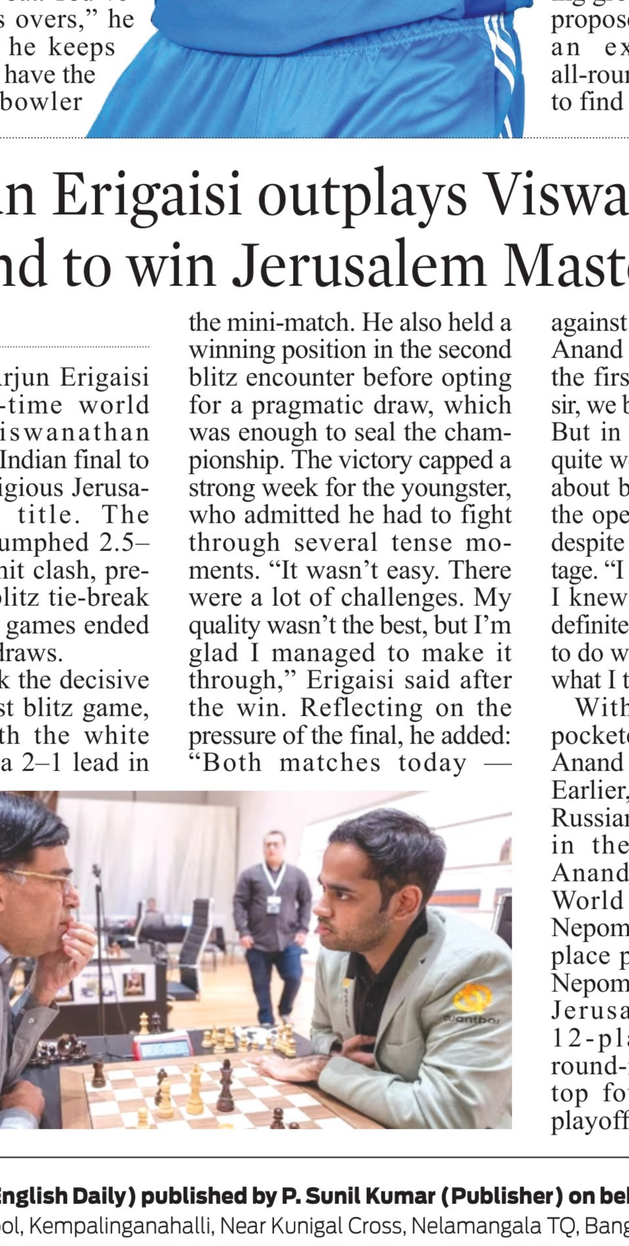
Adding to the concern, two horses in Mysuru have also tested positive, raising fears of a wider regional shutdown. With the disease spreading across major centres, stakeholders now brace for an unprecedented disruption to India's racing calendar.

ASHWIN URGES CLEAR ROLE FOR WASHINGTON SUNDAR

NEW DELHI

Former India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has called on the team management to offer "proper role clarity" to Washington Sundar, cautioning that the young all-rounder may otherwise be left "searching for who he is" in the current ODI setup. Ashwin said Washington must be backed as a frontline bowling all-rounder and given a full quota of overs to establish rhythm and confidence.

Washington, 26, has bowled only seven overs across the first two ODIs against South Africa, going wicketless. Ashwin argued that the limited opportunities undermine his development. "Once you've decided to play Washington Sundar, you've to treat him as a bowler who can bat. You've to bowl out his overs," he said. "Only if he keeps bowling will he have the mindset of a bowler who can bat. Otherwise, if he just bats and bowls a few overs, he'll keep searching for who he is."



India's inability to defend 358 in the second ODI, which South Africa won by four wickets to level the three-match series, has intensified scrutiny on team balance. The hosts had narrowly escaped in the opening ODI despite posting 348.

Ashwin also questioned India's finishing resources in the absence of Hardik Pandya, suggesting that a like-for-like replacement may have been overlooked. "India didn't finish well with the bat in both ODIs. When you don't have a finisher like Hardik Pandya, why didn't a similarly powerful Nitish Kumar Reddy play?" he asked, hinting that the youngster could have been a better fit than Washington in current conditions.

He further wondered whether Rishabh Pant is being groomed as a finisher and proposed that India consider an extra fast-bowling all-rounder if they are unable to find late-overs impact.

Pathan hints Rinku's World Cup hopes fading as Hardik's return reshapes plans

Pathan says Hardik's comeback pushed Rinku out as World Cup core solidifies

NEW DELHI

Former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan has described Rinku Singh as "unfortunate" after the left-hander was omitted from the T20I squad for the upcoming five-match series against South Africa, hinting that the snub may signal the end of his road for the 2026 T20 World Cup. Rinku, who struck the winning boundary in the Asia Cup final against Pakistan just months ago, now finds himself sidelined despite limited opportunities during the Australia tour, where he featured in only one rain-hit game and didn't get to bat.

Pathan believes Rinku's exclusion has everything to do with Hardik Pandya's return from injury. Washington Sundar has been brought in to strengthen India's all-round depth, a clear indication of head coach Gautam Gambhir and captain Suryakumar Yadav's preference for multi-skilled cricketers. According to Pathan, the squad chosen for the South Africa series will form "90–95%" of India's T20 World Cup core.

"Hardik Pandya is back so Rinku Singh is out. He is unfortunate, but this was obvious once Hardik was ready to return. This squad is 90–95% of what India will pick for the 2026 T20 World Cup," Pathan said on his YouTube channel.

He further underlined Hardik's importance in shaping India's title ambitions next year, highlighting the balance he brings as a seam-bowling all-rounder and finisher — a role India value heavily in T20 cricket.

"India have to clear several things — whether they go with Bumrah, Hardik and Shivam Dube, and three spinners in Axar, Kuldeep and Varun. But Hardik's role will be the most crucial for India's progress in T20s and at the World Cup," he added, emphasising that the team's chances may hinge on Hardik and the finisher paired with him.

AITA extends Rohit Rajpal's tenure as Davis Cup captain till 2026

NEW DELHI

The All India Tennis Association (AITA) reappointed Rohit Rajpal as captain of the Indian Davis Cup team, extending his tenure until December 31, 2026. The decision comes as India prepares for a crucial home tie against the Netherlands in the 2026 Davis Cup Qualifiers.

Rajpal, who has helmed the team through multiple Davis Cup campaigns, will continue to provide leadership and stability during an important phase for Indian tennis. Ashutosh Singh has also been retained as the team's coach, ensuring continuity in the support staff setup. The home tie in February will be pivotal as India attempts to break through to the Davis Cup Finals, a goal that has remained elusive in recent years.

The extension means Rajpal will oversee all of India's Davis Cup commitments over the next year, including the Qualifiers and any subsequent fixtures. His experience and rapport with the players were seen as key factors in AITA's decision to prolong his tenure.

Delhi and Karnataka have already shown interest in hosting the Netherlands tie, and AITA is expected to finalise the venue soon. The surface, venue conditions and crowd advantage are likely to play a major role in the choice, given the high stakes attached to the fixture. In its statement, AITA said that further details regarding player nominations and tie preparations would be announced in due course. The association is expected to evaluate player form and fitness over the coming weeks before finalising the squad.

Rajpal's reappointment signals AITA's intent to maintain consistency and build on the current team structure as India targets a return to the global stage of the Davis Cup.

Arjun Erigaisi outplays Viswanathan Anand to win Jerusalem Masters title

JERUSALEM

Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi defeated five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand in an all-Indian final to clinch the prestigious Jerusalem Masters title. The 22-year-old triumphed 2.5–1.5 in the summit clash, prevailing in the blitz tie-break after both rapid games ended in hard-fought draws.

Erigaisi struck the decisive blow in the first blitz game, converting with the white pieces to seize a 2–1 lead in the mini-match. He also held a winning position in the second blitz encounter before opting for a pragmatic draw, which was enough to seal the championship. The victory capped a strong week for the youngster, who admitted he had to fight through several tense moments. "It wasn't easy. There were a lot of challenges. My quality wasn't the best, but I'm glad I managed to make it through," Erigaisi said after the win. Reflecting on the pressure of the final, he added: "Both matches today — against Peter Svidler and then Anand — were very tense. In the first game against Anand sir, we both missed our chances. But in blitz, I think I played quite well." Erigaisi also spoke about briefly losing control in the opening game of the final despite having an early advantage. "I knew I was winning and I knew I messed it up. I was definitely worried. But all I had to do was fight back, and that's what I tried to do," he said.

With the title, Erigaisi pocketed USD 55,000 while Anand received USD 35,000. Earlier, Erigaisi had defeated Russian veteran Peter Svidler in the semifinals, while Anand overcame reigning World Blitz champion Ian Nepomniachtchi. In the third-place playoff, Svidler edged Nepomniachtchi 2.5–1.5. The Jerusalem Masters is a 12-player invitational round-robin event, with the top four advancing to the playoffs.

Lando Norris rules out asking Piastri to move aside in F1 title showdown

ABU DHABI

Lando Norris has made it clear he will not ask McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri to give up a position for him in Sunday's season-deciding Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, even as the two drivers remain locked in a tight three-way championship battle with Max Verstappen.

Norris enters the finale with a 12-point advantage over Verstappen, while Piastri sits four points behind the Red Bull driver, leaving all three contenders with a realistic shot at the 2025 Formula 1 title. The permutations mean Piastri could potentially find himself unable to win the championship but still in position to aid Norris — a scenario the Brit says he isn't comfortable leveraging.

"Honestly, I would love it, but I don't think I would ask," Norris said during pre-race press conference. "It's up to Oscar if he would allow it. I don't think it's down to me. I don't want to ask because I don't think it's a fair question."

Norris added he would be inclined to help Piastri were the situation reversed, though the pair have not discussed any team orders. Piastri, for his part, kept the option open but stressed that no expectations have yet been set by McLaren.

The championship could hinge on race dynamics. If Verstappen wins, Norris needs only a podium to secure his first world title. The Brit had a chance to wrap it up in Qatar last week, but a McLaren pit-stop miscalculation handed victory to Verstappen, with Piastri finishing second and Norris fourth.

Elsewhere, Mercedes' George Russell criticised the notion of favouring one McLaren driver over the other, arguing that both deserve a fair fight for the title. McLaren has not produced a world champion since Lewis Hamilton in 2008, raising the stakes for the Woking-based team heading into Sunday's decider.

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